

OCTOBER 1963

Commentary

VOLUME THIRTY-SIX, NUMBER FOUR

AMERICA & THE WORLD REVOLUTION

A Round-Table Discussion

LEWIS A. COSER

OSCAR GASS

HANS J. MORGENTHAU

ARTHUR SCHLESINGER, JR.

RACE—THE DREAM & THE NIGHTMARE: Leslie A. Fiedler

TRANSLATING THE BIBLE: Theodor H. Gaster

THE COMEDY OF LENNY BRUCE: Albert Goldman

"THE NEW YORKER" & HANNAH ARENDT: Irving Howe

RESPONSES & REACTIONS VI: Norman Mailer

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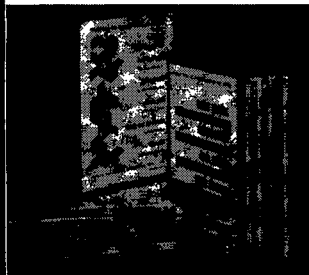
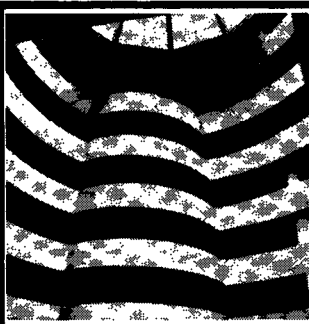
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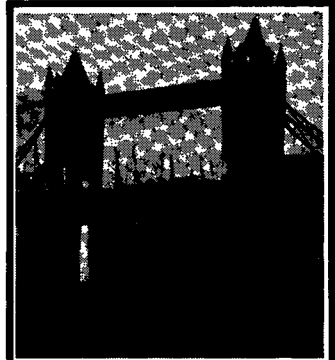
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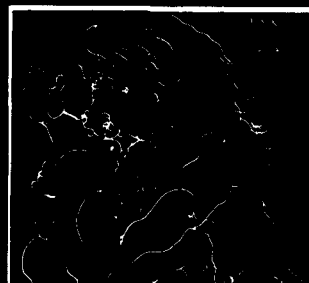
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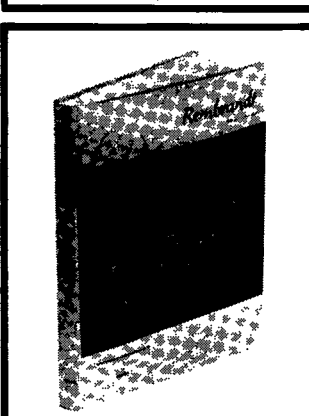
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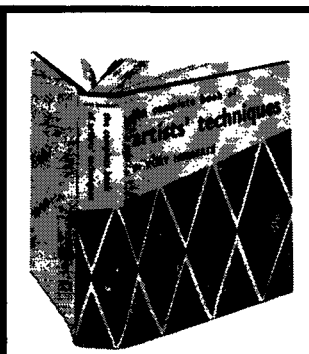
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The Dropouts

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In "An Ideology of School Withdrawal" [June], Edgar Z. Friedenberg has written a remarkable and unorthodox essay. Many will object to his analysis of the dropout, but they will be mainly individuals who have never grasped the problem.

Mr. Friedenberg's panegyric to the dropout is well deserved. With his animal joy, sensitivity to sense experience, and rejection of middle-class repression (and lower-class oppression), the dropout, like the delinquent, exemplifies what might truly be called a successful struggle against the system—not in the sense of acquiring status and social approbation, but rather of avoiding some of the worst features of our society, and in the sense of not getting hung up, as a result of his struggle, on a neurosis (or worse), as have so many of his more introverted brothers, cousins, and neighbors. The dropout plainly shows us what we can do with the system—in clear, unambiguous terms that everyone can understand.

As a caseworker in a juvenile detention home, in daily contact with delinquents and dropouts, I can vouch for the authenticity of Mr. Friedenberg's assessment of these problem children. Whether they are expressing complaints against the school, against their parents, or against others who have not tried to understand them or to respond to their needs (and one of the commonest remarks I hear from these youngsters is that they have never known anyone with whom they could talk over their problems), these children are an inspiration to behold. Their anger sometimes rises to heights of beauty. The important thing for us, however, is that the complaints which these children register are our complaints, their struggle for freedom, independence, and integrity is our struggle. . . . In helping and supporting them in their struggle, we carry on our own struggle for our dearest ideals. . . . As always, Edgar Z. Friedenberg writes with a vitality and originality that are almost disturbing.

HARRY ZITZLER

Chicago, Illinois

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Edgar Z. Friedenberg is becoming a leading exponent of the triumph of language over reality. He should come out of his psychiatric fog and realize that jargon, manipulation, detached cynicism, patronizing indifference, contemptuous possessiveness, and intrusive abuse are problems, not solutions.

WALTER POWERS

New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . Mr. Friedenberg writes: people as wise . . . as Madison thought all kids ought to go to school, it's been U.S. dogma. Obviously that makes it bad; and after some charming philosophy dropping . . . the author is ready to start the real ball rolling. It used to be that lower-class people (let's face facts) dropped out of school and worked; because (amazingly!) they used to be infatuated with education. Now, "the American poor are getting over their addiction" to education, and so we have statistical studies that show . . . that lower-income families have more school dropouts. (This only proves, in the kind of logic here being purveyed, that "compulsory school attendance appears as a gross violation of civil liberty." . . . All points of view are legitimate, in the game played this way, and the least sensible are more legitimate than others, because newer and less fashionable.) The author says that "the youngsters who drop out are probably, in many ways, a more promising moral resource than those who stay in." On what basis does Mr. Friedenberg conclude that deep moral resources are hidden under what other, less philosophical people have called proto-juvenile delinquents. . . . Because . . . "they are driven out in part by moral revulsion from the middle-class life of the school. . . . They can be trusted more safely than their middle-class peers who are trying to make it." . . .

BURTON RAFFEL

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I agreed with E. Z. Friedenberg's previous article ["The Gifted Student and His Enemies," May 1962], in which he criticized the typical under-educated, narrow-minded, and so-

cially insecure public school teacher. However, it does not follow that the youngsters who drop out do so because of an intuited "moral revulsion from the middle-class life of the school." . . . Rather, it is because of a revulsion from the scorn they receive and their increasing inability to cope with texts that make no accommodations to their second-to-sixth-grade reading level. They desire the fruits of middle-class life as shown on television—home, car, clothes, and cocktails as fervently as do the school workers.

As a beginning eighth-grade teacher, with a rural school's lowest non-retarded class for forty-five minutes per day, I was duly apprehensive . . . of a class that was fabled to break a new teacher's back. But the emotions of these children were not so much their own as reactions to those of the teacher. . . . With a modicum of kindness and an absence of scorn from the teacher, they become both uncritical and pliant. Their need for affection, approval, and an aura of a personal relation with a middle-class person is so great that rather than being more in tune with their sense data, they are less so. These youngsters are less formed as individuals . . . than their upper division peers. By comparison, their needs are immature, their reactions are triggered mostly by environment, and their sense of self is non-existent.

To see them as Mr. Friedenberg does, as individuals with a greater personal morality and fidelity, however unformed, is wrong. These children are not only society's but their own souls' waifs.

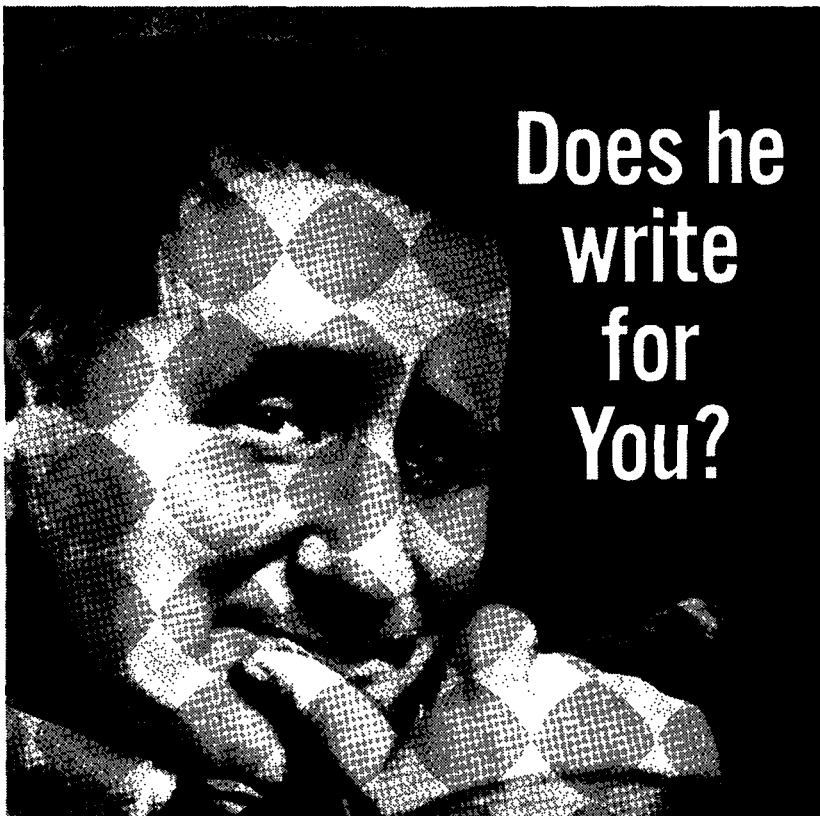
BARBARA SHEFFTZ

Chelsea, Massachusetts

MR. FRIENBERG writes:

Of these letters, only Miss Shefftz's raises substantial issues that can be dealt with in intellectual terms. It seems to me that she raises several distinct points; and she is right about at least two of them.

Part of her criticism is the same as that Paul Goodman raised with me about this paper at the meeting at which I presented it: namely, that I had reified a culture of poverty while the poor themselves want nothing so much as to share in middle-class affluence, and have very little respect



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for their own folkways. This is quite true. But I did not suggest that they didn't want the clothes and the cocktails—only that they were finally reluctant to sell their soul to get them. Miss Sheftz is also correct—though surely we agree—in noting that the humiliation to which the lower-status child is subjected and his inability to handle the tools of education are the factors that mobilize his dependency and precipitate his conflict with and final withdrawal from the school. But this custom of treating lower-class children as objects—and objects not worth the trouble of understanding—itsself expresses a moral attitude which is repugnant to me, and I am sure to them.

The real disagreement between Miss Sheftz and myself seems to be with respect to the proportion of the youngsters broken by the experience; and my observations have left me rather more optimistic about the kids themselves. I was also referring, of course, primarily to older students than eighth-graders. Emotions are always responsive to, and needs are always triggered by, significant other people in the environment; and certainly by teachers. But I find a great many of these youngsters come through loud and clear. It is usually a relief to me to interview them, because I don't have to be so careful as I do with middle-class kids not to cue them; whereas kids who are wise to education tend to give back what I put in.

One possible source of the difference in our observations is suggested by Miss Sheftz's choice of language. "An absence of scorn" and "An aura of a personal relation" are not good enough. There has to be a *presence* of respect—rather than approval—and a *real* personal relationship to evoke the moral resources in these youngsters or anybody else. No doubt their needs do lead them to do what will win them affection and respect; but if they are cherished and respected for their present human qualities, these are what they display. And, in my experience, often richly.

Warsaw Ghetto

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Alexander Donat purports to discuss the Warsaw Ghetto uprising . . . ["Our Last Days in the Warsaw Ghetto," May]. Mr. Donat fought with the Z.O.B. [Jewish Fighters' Organization] of Mordecai Anielewicz. Why cannot Mr. Donat forget party ideology even now and admit that there was another fighting group in Warsaw called the "Irgun ha-Zvai ha-Yehudi," . . . the "Z.Z.W." . . .

the first and more important one? The Z.Z.W. understood the Nazi danger. Its nucleus was *Betar*, *Irgun Zvai Leumi*, and Jewish nationalists who had served in the non-Jewish service. These were the disciples of Ze'ev Vladimir Jabotinsky, who had given warning to Polish Jewry. . . . Anielewicz, the Z.O.B. commander, once belonged to "*Betar*" and he stated that he injected the militant nationalist approach of "*Betar*" into the "pacifists."

Mr. Donat does in fact cite the achievements of the Z.Z.W., but without mentioning them by name. "Muranowska Street," the famous battle street in the Warsaw Ghetto, was the headquarters of the Z.Z.W. Mr. Donat states: "The resistance men there were under the command of Pawel Frankel and Leon Rodal, and were the best armed and best trained in the Ghetto." . . . Frankel and Rodal were leaders of the Z.Z.W. . . .

Further on, Mr. Donat states that "The enemy retired from the Ghetto after sunset." . . . In this engagement with the Z.Z.W., the Germans were badly beaten. Here is ample proof of the power of the Z.Z.W. Why does not Mr. Donat give them just credit?

"Muranow Square," Mr. Donat writes, "was the only Jewish position that did not suffer from an extreme shortage of weapons." The Z.Z.W. was armed to the teeth. Unfortunately, the Germans had tanks and planes and artillery, but even so, the Z.Z.W. defeated the numerically superior and better armed German troops on many an occasion. There is no question that if the Z.Z.W. had had tanks, planes, and artillery on their side, they would have destroyed the German attackers completely.

SAMUEL DYON
Brith Habiryonim—Zealots of Israel
New York City

Albee vs. Chester

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Thanks to Alfred Chester for the truth ["Edward Albee: Red Herrings & White Whales," April]—non-capitalized, non-symbolic, uni-level and precise—about Edward Albee and the school of American drama he represents. . . . I would quarrel only with his tribute to Albee's qualities as an entertainer, a concession which seems excessively generous. Is Albee witty, "dramatic," etc., or does he only seem so . . . by comparison with the mediocrity that is squirted into an insensitive audience's ear already scarred by previous dosages of the same? Whose fault is it—pander-

ing producers', vulgar publics', undemanding critics'—that American playwrights today seem to feel that the only equipment required for their profession is a willingness to spill their guts all over the stage? (Even the most trifling import from England, on the other hand, indicates that over there, in the motherland of the tongue, writers still seem to feel that a gift for language, at least, is indispensable to the practice of their craft.) One may grant Albee an ear for lifelike dialogue, but even then one cannot be sure—and I suggest this in all earnestness—that he didn't simply tape a lot of this stuff . . . and then proceed to organize it in an (inadequately) edited version. If he didn't, I suppose that the suspicion could be construed as a compliment, but it isn't really. Does mechanistic reproduction qualify as art? . . . Lady Macbeth, after all, didn't talk like the lady next door, and neither of the Macbeths, for that matter, were one whit less objectionable as possible next-door neighbors than the psychopaths that Albee has assembled on the stage at the Billy Rose. Still, one's heart goes out to those Elizabethan creations because to this day—lifelike dialogue or no—they have size! . . .

My guess is that *Virginia Woolf's* amazing . . . popularity lies in the fact that most of the audience finds itself happily unable to identify with Albee's characters. He provides them with an evening of escape and relaxation, like an Agatha Christie . . . If his stuff isn't very funny, at least it isn't depressing; and it is divertingly sensational—a painless peepshow. Nor, reassuringly, is it long-hair Art (though it is pretentious enough so that over after-theater coffee one can discuss it as if it were) . . .

MARGERY SILVER
Roslyn Heights, New York

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Alfred Chester seems to have missed the point about *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* All through the play, the characters play games of alliteration like "Get the Guests," "Hump the Hostess," and "Bringing Up Baby." This brings up the question of what game Albee is playing. Who are George and Martha really supposed to be? A little reflection shows us that they are Jason and Medea of Greek legend.

Albee's theme . . . is the diminishing differences between the sexes today, or the increasing masculinity of the female, etc. The sterility of the characters, far from being obscure or incidental, is essential to it. His device for bringing out the point of di-

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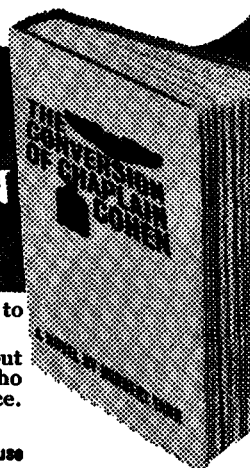
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minishing sexual differences is the reversal of the legendary roles of Jason and Medea.

Medea was, of course, a princess in a small kingdom, and Martha, daughter of the college president in a college community, is also a "princess." In the legend there is antagonism between Jason and Medea's father . . . Medea married him despite this. George is in an analogous position at the start of the play. Martha's father has prevented his success, but from this point on, the male and female roles are reversed. It is Martha who attempts adultery; . . . but though in the legend Medea . . . has the power to restore sexual vigor, in the play Martha, the masculine woman, in her "Walpurgisnacht" seems to do the opposite.

Medea's revenge, as told in the legend, takes two forms. First she sends a beautiful gown to Jason's would-be bride which magically bursts into flame when put on. Second, in an effort to hurt Jason as much as possible, she murders their children. George, similarly, in this role reversal, has two actions to perform. In the third act . . . he presents a bouquet of snapdragons to Nick (dragons evoke the thought of fire), and hurls them one by one at Nick and Honey in an effort to destroy them morally. And at the climax of the play he murders his and Martha's (non-existent) offspring.

The classical unities of time and place, the small cast, the dialogues, the off-stage murder, pointing to a Greek tradition, all seem to have gone unnoticed by the critics. Albee's play is a beautiful transposition of the Greek legend and a timely comment on our society.

ANTHONY and DOLORES FILANDRO
 Brooklyn, New York

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

To begin a critical article on a major work of theater by saying that "it is a truth universally acknowledged that no self-respecting piece of writing, if it wishes to be taken seriously, dare appear in public nowadays without three or four levels of meaning" is fairly typical of Alfred Chester's technique. He constantly makes statements which only he seems to understand and then backs them up with phrases like "universally acknowledged" or "universally accepted" or "well-known."

Literature has always been more than a simple recounting of a narrative, and from earliest times when the first critic found meaning beyond that easily grasped by simple minds, the accusation has been made of

"reading things into the work." No reader that I know of shouts "Eureka" or "Aha!" as he reads . . . Nor does any approach it, as Mr. Chester suggests, like the *Times* crossword puzzle. . . .

What I object to, more than anything else, is Mr. Chester's technique. Under the guise of assisting those who haven't seen the play, he offers a version of the story that seems to have no relation to the original. The critical technique here is to set up a straw man (or a straw play) and then tear it apart. It doesn't seem terribly important to Mr. Chester that the play he has recounted is a long way from the play that Mr. Albee wrote. . . . The rest of Mr. Chester's technique is equally spurious. He excerpts little sections of dialogue . . . which of course could be done by anyone with a copy of the book in his hand. He takes these sections out of context and then draws all sorts of conclusions from them.

Contrary to Mr. Chester's . . . assumption that the play is a mass of symbols and allegories, it is, like all works of art in the theater . . . a dialogue between living human beings that contains . . . certain universal truths that help us understand the dilemma of our times. . . . Albee shows us what—in real life—always lies just beneath the surface. . . .

Though Mr. Chester's final paragraph . . . proceeds from a series of syllogisms and non sequiturs, it does not even follow his own premise. The artist never functions as a judge, and Mr. Albee is the first to recognize this. He is, like all artists . . . sharper in his perception . . . more understanding in his commentary, more talented than his critics in the presentation of his work. I fully expected Mr. Chester to complain that Martha and George having been named Martha and George, were probably representative of Martha and George Washington. . . .

The critical process is not one of deciding what you want to say about a work of art and then recounting the work of art to fit your preconceived conclusions . . . I believe the red herrings are Mr. Chester's, and the white whales—Mr. Albee's.

LEE R. BOBKER

New York City

Goldman Defended

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I am stunned at the intensity of the reaction ["Letters from Readers," June, July] to Albert Goldman's article, "The Predicament of the Jewish Musician" [February].



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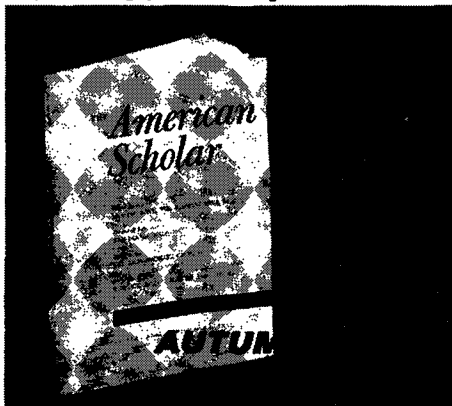
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The reader, of course, is justified in questioning several of the details of Mr. Goldman's judgment, particularly those involving the work of Mendelssohn and Schoenberg. Nevertheless, the essence of his thesis—that the interpretive gifts of Jewish musicians far outweigh the creative ones—is entirely correct.

In an age of extreme liberalism such as this is, the critical discussion of the limitations of an oppressed group is regarded as a criminal act. This is unfortunate.

JOAN PEYSER

New York City

Jews & Unitarians**TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:**

In Milton Himmelfarb's article ["Some Attitudes Toward Jews," May], he concludes: "the liberals offer me [the Jews] friendship because I am a man but slight my tradition and memories. The Neo-Orthodox offer me friendship because God is my father and the father of all men; and they also honor my tradition." He says he prefers the Neo-Orthodox position and feels it is better for the Jews. As a Unitarian I have a few ideas on the subject based solely upon personal experience and reflection.

You will find persons friendly and unfriendly to Jews in both Neo-Orthodox and liberal churches since personal attitudes and conditioning determine this. . . . Generally speaking, Neo-Orthodox persons are more interested in religious tradition than are religious liberals, and hence give it more importance. (They are also more concerned with the life to come, I might add.)

On a practical, social level I find much greater friendship and cooperation between Unitarians and Jews (frequently Reform Jews) than between Jews and any Neo-Orthodox denomination. This includes both personal and group relationships. I conclude that the main principles of liberal religion (freedom, reason, and brotherhood) are more important in establishing a working friendship between Jews and non-Jews than is respect for tradition. Also, whether a person considers himself a theist or humanist is not very relevant in this matter.

JOHN S. GRIFFEN

Indianapolis, Indiana

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Milton Himmelfarb's remarks . . . reflect an image of contemporary Unitarianism (as well as of its 19th-century antecedents) which requires

qualification. Though it is true that its dominant tendency in the recent past has been substantially identical with the faith of Ethical Culture, new currents of thought are leading to a reappraisal of the vague humanism and naturalism which have constituted a kind of Liberal Fundamentalism. There is an emerging "Neo-Liberalism," chastened by the realities of the Age of Auschwitz and deeply responsive to the present-day renewal of theological and liturgical vitality in the Christian churches. To this enterprise of renewal, Unitarians can offer a good deal more than the smug self-satisfaction which Henry Adams (and Mr. Himmelfarb) deplored as characteristic of "the Boston Religion." A fairer picture of the Unitarian past would include such men as Channing and Martineau who combined Christian piety with a passionate belief in the sovereignty of reason and conscience. . . .

Despite the aggressive dogmatism of some secular humanists, there is no Unitarian "party line" (not even the worship of Scientific Method!). Strictly speaking, there is no Unitarian denomination, in the usual sense . . . but a congregational fellowship of Unitarian and Universalist churches freely associated for certain common purposes. Within this association there exists a lively theological diversity and ferment. So that the religious education program to which Mr. Himmelfarb refers . . . is meant to be supplemented according to the particular needs of local churches. That the curriculum itself is undergoing continual revisions gives ground for hope that it may rediscover the abiding validity of its own Liberal Christian heritage. Many Unitarians are not unmindful of the depressing bankruptcy of German religious Liberalism before the Nazi "wave of the future" and its substitution of a secular culture for the worship of the God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Jesus Christ.

In short, Mr. Himmelfarb should know that there are Liberals who, in his words, offer him friendship both because he is a man and because they are deeply committed not to a syncretic "world faith," but to a Liberal Christian tradition whose very being is rooted in the history of Israel. Surely, Unitarians, Christians or not, are entitled to a little sinful pride when they contemplate the melancholy history of Christian orthodoxy in its encounter with the Jews and Judaism.

(REV.) CHARLES H. WHITTIER
Somerville, Massachusetts

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Algerian Exodus

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

The awkwardness of the Algerian Jewish policeman in a French synagogue, described by Arnold Mandel in "France's Algerian Jews" [June], is poignant testimony to what may be one of the greatest failures of Zionism and Israel to date. I am referring to the rejection of Israel in the mass exodus of the Algerian community.

Certainly few Jewish communities have ever existed whose physical, economic, and cultural background and attitude toward Judaism might have resulted in more successful Aliyah than the sturdy . . . middle-class Mediterranean Algerian Jews. Here was a group, from government clerks to soccer players, which had the skills and loyalties that would be ideally suited to build the nation of Israel. . . .

The Israeli officials who are spokesmen in these matters have been heard to speak with resignation and intellectual contempt of the community's choice of the "fleshpots" of France. But those concerned with the ingathering of the exiles and the upbuilding, in quality and quantity, of Israel's population . . . had better examine carefully why the Algerian Jews made their stand and left with the O.A.S. Why did an organized, non-assimilationist Jewish community choose a French nation, in which few had ever lived, instead of casting its lot with a Jewish State, whose economy is on the upswing, with built-in acceptance for Jewish boxers, cops, building contractors, math teachers, and even rabbis? . . . Perhaps some official or some group in Israel blundered. Maybe the Algerians were concerned about anti-Sephardic attitudes. . . . But possibly the roots of the Algerian rejection of Israel lie in the description of the families who "gave their hearts and money" to Israel, but did not consider Aliyah. I suggest that the history of Zionism proves that charity and immigration to Israel from free countries do not mix . . . as is shown by the fact that money, but no settlers, have come from Latin America, Africa, and others where there seems to be little future for Jewish life, as well as from the United States, Canada, and England.

As long as the State of Israel makes begging part of its official world-wide activity it is creating a psychological climate that directly militates against Aliyah. . . .

BURTON M. HALPERN

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HANS J. MORGENTHAU

ARTHUR SCHLESINGER, JR.

Last spring, COMMENTARY invited LEWIS A. COSER, OSCAR GASS, HANS J. MORGENTHAU, and ARTHUR SCHLESINGER, JR., to participate in a three-hour round-table discussion of America's role in the underdeveloped world. The discussion, held before an invited audience and moderated by NORMAN PODHORETZ, editor of COMMENTARY, was wholly spontaneous. What follows is a slightly abridged transcript of the entire proceedings.

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Norman Podhoretz: By way of putting our subject into some sort of manageable perspective, let me quote something Walter Lippmann said in May of 1961, about a year after President Kennedy took office: "We cannot compete with Communism in Asia, Africa, or Latin America if we go on doing what we have done so often and so widely, which is to place the weak countries in a dilemma where they will stand still with us and our client rulers or start moving with the Communists. This dilemma cannot be resolved unless it is our central and persistent and unswerving policy to offer these unhappy countries a third option, which is economic development and social improvement without the totalitarian discipline of Communism. For the only real alternative to Communism is a liberal and progressive society."

There are, of course, people who would disagree with that definition of the situation, but assuming for the moment that Lippmann is right, two large questions immediately present themselves. In the first place, to what extent is the United States *capable* of offering these "unhappy countries" a third option? After all, forces exist

in this country which oppose a policy of lending support to socialist and neutralist regimes, and one of the things we want to know is whether they are strong enough to inhibit a really effective program from being put into action. We also want to know how strong the other inhibiting factors are: our own well-advertised reluctance to intervene directly in the internal affairs of other countries; the equally well-advertised corruption of the governing elites in some of the underdeveloped countries; and the consequent difficulty we have had in fostering social reform even when, as in the case of the Alliance for Progress, we have made social reform a precondition of American aid.

But whether or not the United States is capable of offering the underdeveloped countries "economic development and social improvement without the totalitarian discipline of Communism," the second big question is: to what extent the United States has, in fact, tried to follow such a policy. There are those who say that our policy under the Eisenhower administration was simply to support the most vociferously anti-Communist faction in a given country, no matter what else

such a faction may have stood for politically, and even though there may have been other factions better equipped to lead the country into the modern world. Has this situation changed under President Kennedy? If so, how significantly, and what have the consequences so far been? In short, what is American policy on these matters?

Mr. Schlesinger, you, of course, have had direct experience of the Alliance for Progress, which is a highly relevant example in this whole discussion, and you have also been involved in the making of American policy during the Kennedy administration. How do the questions that I've just raised look from the White House?

Arthur Schlesinger, Jr.: It is, of course, impossible to render any general answer to the question whether the underdeveloped world will move in a democratic rather than a totalitarian direction. By any social or economic standard ranging from the gross national product to, say, the number of doctors in relation to population, the gap between what one can roughly call the developed and the underdeveloped countries is greater today than it was ten years ago. And the momentum of development is such that once a country reaches what Walt Rostow calls the takeoff period, it's going to move much faster than countries still in the pre-takeoff period. Now, there are some countries in the underdeveloped world of whose future one can speak of with confidence—Venezuela, for example, or India. If favorable conditions continue, these countries will make the leap into the 20th century within a framework that will become increasingly real in its democracy as the process of modernization goes on. On the other hand, there are countries which are probably going to fall farther and farther behind in the whole modernization process, including the process of democratization. I think, therefore, that a general answer to the question of the technical feasibility of democratic development is impossible. All one can say is that some among the underdeveloped countries stand a pretty good chance of successfully completing the modernization process and emerging as democracies, and others are going to have a very hard time—for a period, at least.

As to the contribution the U. S. has made, is making, and can make, to this process: I think the first point to be emphasized here is the one that D. W. Brogan made in a *Harper's* article ten or twelve years ago when he spoke about the delusion of American omnipotence. The United States cannot, by its own efforts or its own eco-

nomic assistance or its own political exhortation or its own political blackmail, produce changes in underdeveloped countries if the means and desire to make those changes do not exist already. All the United States can do is provide the supplement and the reinforcement. It cannot furnish substitutes for the economic resources or the political will which are necessary to enable a country to begin the development process on its own.

This supplement, this marginal assistance, may be a vital element in enabling a country to choose between totalitarian and democratic methods of development. I have no doubt that external assistance to the Indian development program, for example, has permitted India to preserve and strengthen democratic political processes. Had that external assistance not been available to help generate capital investment, India might well have had to resort to much more authoritarian methods. In that sense, the element of external assistance may make a considerable difference.

Still, what really counts in the process of development is the existence in the country itself of two things: one of them is sufficient economic resources to meet a large share of its need for capital investment, and the other is a political will to modernize and a cultural aptitude for participating in the processes necessary for modernization. Where those things exist, then the United States can help them along. But I think we delude ourselves if we suppose that by voting twice as large an economic assistance program, or by accompanying the economic assistance program with all sorts of stipulations about structural reform, or by divesting it of all sorts of prohibitions against nationalization, the effect will be magical. It will not. In the end, the role of the United States in the underdeveloped countries can only be to supplement and reinforce the conditions working toward modernization.

Now, to what extent has the United States done this in the past, and to what extent are we doing it now? I think that our record since the foreign-aid program began has been one of considerable groping and uncertainty. That groping and uncertainty were in large part inherent in the problem of trying to come to terms with conditions and issues of underdevelopment which, in this acute and exotic form, were unprecedented in our national experience. We know much more about the processes of development today than we did in the late 1940's when the foreign-aid program began. Development economics is a relatively new discipline, and the development economists themselves have learned a great deal from

the trial and error through which we have gone. We understand now, for example, that economic development must be studied in a much broader political and cultural setting if we are really to advance the processes of modernization. And the whole problem is, of course, further complicated both by the politics of the cold war and by the domestic politics that shape the foreign-assistance program.

I've never been a great admirer of the Eisenhower administration, and I think that administration made many errors in the field of foreign aid. One of those errors, in my opinion, was their belief that Latin American economic development could be brought about essentially by private investment. I think this error also produced accompanying errors; for, if creation of a climate favorable to private investment was the most important thing, it followed that the United States should support conservative governments, even military dictatorships, which promised to give highest priority to the protection of foreign investors. Yet even the Eisenhower administration was far from consistent or dogmatic in this line. For almost a decade it accepted and to a degree subsidized the Bolivian revolution, which was one of the authentic Latin American revolutions.

I think there has, however, been a clear change since the Kennedy administration came in, partly as a consequence of the greater insight we now have into the processes and requirements of modernization, and partly as a consequence of a different political drive and direction. The Alliance for Progress is one expression of the new drive. It is based on the assumption that external assistance by itself, and unaccompanied by changes in social structure, will not produce effective economic growth and will probably even aggravate the social and economic inequities which remain the great obstacle to modernization. If modernization is going to come, there must be reforms, not just for purposes of equity and out of compassion, but also to make external assistance effective. The Alliance for Progress therefore assumes a series of changes in social structure as a condition concurrent to the effective use of economic aid. This has produced many political and diplomatic problems of its own, for how one country can guide another into doing things internally it may not want to do is a very difficult question, and in some respects an insoluble one. Even so, the general model of the Alliance for Progress seems to me the best hope for the United States to make an effective contribution to the

processes of democratic modernization in the underdeveloped countries.

Podhoretz: Mr. Coser, I know that as a socialist you've criticized the notion of an ineluctable drift toward totalitarianism in the underdeveloped world, and I believe that you've also urged a greater stress on the factors of equity and compassion—to use Mr. Schlesinger's terms—as distinct from considerations of American national interest. I suspect, therefore, that your view of the problem before us would differ somewhat from Mr. Schlesinger's.

Lewis A. Coser: Well, when I just heard Mr. Schlesinger talk about the groping and the uncertainty of American foreign policy, I felt that this was very much an understatement. My feeling is that, by and large, there isn't really any American policy toward the various underdeveloped countries. There has been a tendency to try and work somehow with anyone who happened to be in power in those countries—good, bad, or indifferent—and as far as I can see, there has been no serious effort to determine what lines of development would be desirable, what kinds of policies should get priority, and so on. As a result, the image that the typical intellectual in the underdeveloped countries gets of the United States is totally confused. I don't mean those intellectuals who have gone over to the other side. I am talking about those who in some way would perhaps be quite willing to listen to initiatives coming from our side, but who simply don't know what we stand for. For example, we talk sometimes about the struggle for the minds of the uncommitted peoples, but what is an uncommitted intellectual to think when he reads about our military aid to Mr. Diem in South Vietnam and more particularly about the kind of chemical warfare that we have been introducing into South Vietnam recently—destroying the rice paddies and the foliation in the jungles so as to make it impossible for the peasants to survive in those areas and hence to help the Communist guerrillas? Well, if I were a South Asian intellectual and I read about the battle for the minds of men and then about this sort of thing, which quite inevitably drives these peasants in precisely the direction we don't want them to go—namely, into more support of the guerrillas—I think I would be totally disillusioned with any kind of lead that America might offer to give.

Let me cite one or two other examples. Most intellectuals in these countries appear to believe that development is only possible along planned

and guided lines. There is simply no private capital available in these areas; there is simply no independent entrepreneurial class that could play the role that such a class played, let us say, in the development of English capital. Therefore, no matter what their particular political line, the intellectuals in the underdeveloped countries are all convinced that some kind of planned development is necessary in order to boost production. And then they read about a certain report by a certain Mr. Clay—the famous Clay Report—which tells the President that we must not in any way support anything but free private enterprise. Well, if I were an Asian or an African intellectual, I would say either that these people are crazy, or if that is what they stand for, then it might be better after all to establish a closer connection with the Russians: we don't like them, but at least they know that private enterprise can't bring about economic development.

Or take Latin America. If I were a Latin American intellectual, I would have been very favorably disposed toward the Alliance for Progress and its stated aim of fostering social reform to make economic development possible. But by now I would be very confused about the real intentions of the United States. In Peru not long ago, there was a military coup and a suspension of democratic processes. The American ambassador protested, and it looked as though things would go in the right direction: America, after all, was going to do something. And then a week later, the ambassador was withdrawn, and Washington recognized the new regime. It is things like that, I think, which have completely blurred the image of America, and sometimes even made it a most undesirable image for people in the underdeveloped world who aspire to democratic ways.

Now, there remains one question: Given the highly rigid and in most cases fairly reactionary structures that prevail in, let us say, Latin America, is it possible to do anything in these countries without profound structural changes? The current administration seems to think that it is—that, after all, you've got to work with what is there and hope for the best. And this, in my opinion, only strengthens those Latin American intellectuals who have become Castroites, who say that if America is going to back these structures, then, obviously, the only thing to do is follow the Cuban model. The question, then, is: could an American administration, despite all the difficulties, come up with a policy which deliberately supports major structural changes? I

don't mean gradual reforms that would come into effect sixty years from now; I mean drastic radical reforms that would make a difference now in, say, the Northeast of Brazil. Can this be done? I become more and more skeptical. Observing the present administration, I more and more have the feeling that it will not be done. And if it will not be done, then I'm very much afraid that the drift, among the intellectuals at least, will simply be away from America and toward the Communists. The intellectuals have, of course, become the key figures in all these countries. They will be increasingly decisive in the political struggles that are to come, and if we lose them, we will finally have lost the battle for democratic development.

Podhoretz: Mr. Morgenthau, you wrote once, probably with provocative intent, that as there are bums and beggars, so there are bum and beggar nations—which indicates your view of the limits of American initiative in supplying a "third option" to the underdeveloped countries. You've also spoken of the necessity for framing foreign-aid policies in terms of political aims dictated by the American national interest. So I imagine that your view of the situation would differ radically from the one Mr. Coser has just given us.

Hans J. Morgenthau: Well, I'm not sure that my views differ radically from those of Mr. Coser, and I'm sure that I had no provocative intent when I wrote the sentence which you and so many others have quoted. There are also many other sentences in that article which have not been quoted. But let me say first of all that our attitude toward the uncommitted third of the world has been influenced greatly, decisively, by an economic determinism which I think has now proved to be entirely erroneous. We have fashioned our foreign-aid policy toward the uncommitted, underdeveloped nations in terms of a number of simple equations, based on assumptions which are deeply ingrained in the American folklore of politics, but which are, nevertheless, very gravely at odds with reality. First of all, we have thought that economic underdevelopment results from the lack of capital and technological know-how—that certain people are so poor that they cannot create capital and technological know-how—and that therefore we can put them on the road to economic development by introducing those two factors from the outside. I think if one wanted to overstate the case, one could rather put it the other way around—that

is to say, that certain nations lack capital and technological know-how because they are underdeveloped in the rational and moral faculties which go into the making of a modern industrial and economic system. In other words, it is not by an act of fate that certain nations are underdeveloped economically. It is rather that they don't have the non-economic human resources—at least they don't have them as of now—which are the prerequisites for creating a modern economic establishment.

We should always remember the history of Western economic development and the profound intellectual and moral revolutions which were necessary to bring it to fruition. Regardless of whether one accepts Max Weber's idea that the Protestant ethic was the main factor in the rise of Western capitalism, certainly without the secularization of the Western outlook, economic development in the modern sense would not have been possible. Nor would it have been possible without the rationalization of Western civilization.

Take, for instance, what seems to us to be a simple and self-evident instrumentality for economic development—saving for a future emergency or for gainful investment. There are hundreds of millions of people in the world who have no conception of saving—who don't know what it is. There is a story, which may be apocryphal, of an Indian porter who refused to carry another suitcase because he had already eaten that day. Or take a civilization like the Burmese, which has driven our foreign-aid officials in that country almost to despair. The Burmese have an otherworldly orientation, they believe that success in this world is an impediment to the success that really counts, success in the other world. It seems to me rather questionable whether one can establish a modern economic civilization on such a moral and intellectual basis.

It also seems to me questionable whether the assumption which underlies our foreign aid—that is, the idea that industrial civilization is a common aspiration of all mankind—is really justified. A couple of years ago I took a trip through Asia looking for the revolution of rising expectations, of which I had written and spoken before very eloquently and with deep emotion. I looked for those rising peasant masses, dissatisfied with their lot. In Japan there are certain segments of the peasantry who may have such aspirations, but everywhere else you look in Asia, you find tendencies toward what one can call national revolutions; but the revolution of rising expectations,

in the sense in which we use that term in the West, is at the very best a spotty affair. At the beginning of that trip, when I was more naïve than at the end, I remember asking one of our ambassadors on the Asian mainland: "Where are those revolutionary peasants?" He said "I'll give you a dollar for each one you can find." So this revolution of rising expectations is a literary phrase which appeals to our emotions and our liberal instincts (insofar as we've got any), but which is really a very doubtful proposition as a description of reality. I won't here go into the other equally doubtful equations in terms of which our foreign-aid program is framed—the ones that tell us, for instance, that economic development leads to social stability, that social stability leads to democracy, that democracy leads to a peaceful foreign policy. All those propositions, I think, have been refuted, if not by theoretical analysis, then certainly by historic experience. So let me say at this moment only that the idea of foreign aid as a third choice, an alternative to backwardness and Communism, which we can present by our own volition to the rest of humanity, is an enormous simplification and a real misstatement of the tremendously complex problems we are facing.

To elaborate on the point Mr. Coser made, and also to elaborate on what I have said before, we have greatly underestimated, and I think we still underestimate, the primacy of politics in this whole area. Take as an example the seemingly simple idea of remedying illiteracy by teaching people how to read and write. The underlying assumption here is that there are people so poor and so miserable that they don't even have the means to teach their children how to read and write, and we must therefore help them to do so. But what we forget is that there are many countries in the world where the maintenance of illiteracy is one of the chief political weapons in defense of the status quo. For an illiterate peasant is more likely to be a pliable object of the rule of an oligarchy than a peasant who can read and who can therefore inform himself about what is going on in the world and can acquire certain ideas about the legitimacy of the status quo. So the maintenance and the abolition of illiteracy are in themselves primary political acts. The remedies for illiteracy cannot be introduced into backward nations through a free choice on our part, because even if *we* don't know it, the oligarchies in those countries know that education, the enlightenment of these oppressed masses, represents an implicit challenge to the status quo.

Now, as far as the question of revolution or radical reform in the underdeveloped nations is concerned, it seems to me that the problem is again more complex than it has been made out to be. For we are really faced here with a terrible, and, perhaps, insoluble dilemma. Where social reform and the establishment of a modern economic and technological system require political change, we must either give up our desire to bring about economic and technological development, or we must be willing to support radical political reform, if not revolution. And I am convinced that in many of the underdeveloped nations the alternatives before us are not the support of the status quo as against the support of revolution, but rather revolution under non-Communist auspices as against revolution under Communist auspices. And here, I think, we are faced with two further dilemmas.

First of all, we pride ourselves on being a revolutionary nation—and, of course, in terms of our history we *are* a revolutionary nation. But our revolution was of an entirely different nature from the revolutions which are incipient in many underdeveloped nations. For ours was essentially a national revolution—what Mr. Khrushchev would call a “war of national liberation”—while the revolutions which are incipient in many of the uncommitted and underdeveloped nations are really social revolutions, more on the order of the French Revolution of 1789. And so, if our own conscience, our awareness of our own revolutionary past, leads us toward the support of revolution, our political insight also tells us that the revolutions we are called upon to support are entirely different from the one *we* made.

The other dilemma is practical rather than moral and intellectual. It is easy to start a revolution—if we put our minds to it, we could certainly instigate revolutions in many of those countries—but it is difficult to control the course of a revolution once it has been set going. Thus while we might start a revolution under non-Communist auspices, in view of the fact that in many underdeveloped nations the only disciplined, dedicated social force are the Communist cadres, the likelihood exists—as the Cuban developments have shown—that this revolution will end under Communist auspices. And so, though I agree with the details of Mr. Coser’s criticisms, I would not want to support the opinion that a more intelligent or more determined administration could very well change the course of our policy. I think we are faced with a real dilemma, and by definition, there is no clear-cut solution to it.

I should also add, in view of what Mr. Schlesinger has said, that I don’t believe that the difference between the policies of the Eisenhower and the Kennedy administrations is so radical as it must appear to him from his peculiar perspective. I would rather say that in theory there is much more enlightenment in the councils of government today than there was a couple of years ago; this becomes obvious when you look at the philosophy underlying the Alliance for Progress. But if you look at the practice of the Alliance for Progress, you find again to what extent the objective factors with which we must deal in the underdeveloped nations leave us hardly any choice with regard to our policies. It is true the philosophy of the Alliance for Progress stipulates that assistance to Latin American countries should be predicated upon the social and political and fiscal reforms necessary to the success of economic aid. And so we tell Brazil, for instance: you must do this, you must do that, you must do the other, before we can give you foreign aid. But then one day the Brazilian Minister of Finance comes to Washington and says: If we don’t get so many million dollars by next Monday, we’ll go broke and the Communists will take over. The result is that he gets, well perhaps not exactly what he wants, but two-thirds of it. I’m not criticizing the administration for this—it is inevitable. It does, however, show that while the theory is much better than it used to be, the practice has largely remained—and is perhaps bound to remain—what it has always been.

Podhoretz: Well, Mr. Gass, Mr. Morgenthau has given you a very good opportunity to make some money. You’ve spent a lot of time in the underdeveloped countries, and Mr. Morgenthau has a friend who’s offering a dollar for every peasant with rising expectations you can show him. How many can you produce for him? Is there a revolution of rising expectations and if there is, what are we doing about it?

Oscar Gass: I’m going to answer Mr. Podhoretz’s question only indirectly, after my fashion. I take it that the reason I was asked to speak fourth in this sequence is that I could be counted upon to agree with all the preceding speakers. And I do. Nevertheless, as they spoke, my mind kept running back to the days when I was working on these problems of economic development in one of the more promising situations—in Jerusalem, some years ago. From time to time the tensions and frustrations of the job we were trying to do almost overcame me. I could not accomplish what I wanted to accomplish. And it seemed to me, when I was

in a slightly more philosophical mood, that the reason was that my Israeli friends and associates were more concerned to be, in their language, *k'chol adam*—like all of humanity—than I wanted them to be. I had a colleague who used on such occasions to comfort me—he thought he was comforting me—with a French witticism: “The loveliest lady of France cannot give more than that which she has.” In our case the lady was Israel, who was ostensibly exerting herself, but could not give more than what she had. The lady we’re talking about now is the United States. And it has occurred to me today over and over again that what we are mainly dealing with are the limitations of the actor. We are regarding the less-developed countries as the acted-upon. Sometimes we talk about their limitations, but I think primarily we’re talking about our own. And since one speaks so critically about what can be accomplished and what cannot be accomplished by economic means, I would like to bore you a little by introducing a few numbers.

Let me again begin with the State of Israel, of whose economic problems I have had some personal experience. The State of Israel has been in existence for approximately fifteen years, and now has a population of about two-and-a-quarter million. In the course of those fifteen years of what is regarded by some as successful economic development, there has been a capital inflow into Israel of the rough order of magnitude of four-and-a-half, perhaps five billion dollars. Let’s think a minute. That was a capital inflow of about two thousand dollars per person over a fifteen-year period. Israeli circumstances are somewhat special, the achievement in the case of Israel is greater than in other countries, the human material is different, the social situation is different. None of us working there, however, would have believed that anything remotely like what we achieved in Israel with a capital inflow of two thousand dollars per person could have been achieved with a capital inflow of five hundred dollars per person. I think that those who lived through the process and have thought about it would probably say with very considerable unanimity that with a capital inflow of five hundred dollars per person we probably would have gone under, and the State of Israel probably would not have survived.

Now, with that example in mind, I’d like to look for a moment at what the United States is in fact doing in quantitative terms for the underdeveloped countries, because the popular discussion of this matter is usually grotesquely out of proportion to the reality. Let’s take a year like 1962. In

1962, the total foreign-aid program of the government of the United States—and that includes grants and loans for all purposes—was about four-and-a-quarter billion dollars gross. However, the rest of the world repaid us slightly more than a billion-and-a-quarter dollars gross, so we made available to all the world approximately three billion dollars net. Of that three billion dollars, rather more than a billion was aid in the form of military hardware supplied without payment, and approximately three-quarters of a billion dollars more was aid to a limited number of East Asian countries—South Korea, Taiwan, Vietnam, and their near neighbors—to support what we call the defense buildup. We also made available approximately 150 million dollars to various international institutions like the International Bank and the International Monetary Fund. What was left over from all this went to the rest of the world.

Let me now particularize what was left over and talk about it in an area which very much concerns us, and let me talk about it not in any critical partisan mood but only in an effort to understand. Roughly, over the fifteen-year period from 1945 to 1960, the United States made available to Latin America in grants and loans about one hundred million dollars net a year—on the average. As Latin America has about 225,000,000 people, that was about fifty cents per capita each year. Think of it: we made available for development *fifty cents*. Now I’m not saying this to be facetious. I’m saying it so we can see the perspective of these things. We changed to the Alliance for Progress—and a much wider perspective, a much more thorough involvement, a feeling on the part of a new government of the United States that while we had concerned ourselves with problems in other areas of the world, here was an area on our very doorstep about which we had done nothing. And so we committed ourselves to try to make available to Latin America, in various ways and from sources of all kinds, approximately a billion dollars a year for development purposes. Let’s look at what happened in the year 1962.

In the year 1962, the U. S. government lent five hundred million dollars net to Latin America. It gave to all of Latin America approximately three hundred million dollars in military and non-military aid. And American private capital invested in Latin America one hundred and fifty million dollars, and in 1960, less than a hundred million dollars. What do these figures mean? The United States earned on its property in Latin America in the year 1962 about a billion, two hundred million dollars—from earnings on direct investments, on

portfolio investments, and on the debts payable in dollars that the U. S. government had outstanding. We did make available in various forms, private and public, about a billion dollars of capital to Latin America in the year 1962. But we earned a billion, two hundred million. In other words, two hundred million more than we poured in.

Having said something specific, I'll tell you my conclusion in general. It is this: the quantity of U. S. loans and grants to the rest of the world is not of the order of magnitude to be a factor of the first significance in the development of the poorer countries. It's just not that important. One understands that capital can be used for strategic purposes and for non-strategic purposes—I mean strategic in terms of economic development. But you see, even in the area of the world to which we are devoting our greatest effort—and an effort quite unprecedented in our recent history—we are only exerting a lever which is so small that it's ridiculous to expect from it any really significant consequences. No serious person could expect such a thing. What is a billion dollars to Latin America? A billion dollars is between four and five dollars per capita. Archimedes said that if he had a big enough lever, he could move the whole earth, but he wouldn't have thought he could move the earth with this pencil.

I think I know something about the cultural factors that are relevant here and that Mr. Morgenthau mentioned—the institutional factors, the availability or non-availability of entrepreneurs. I think I know what economic investment plans mean, and what their absence means, too. But I do not, in any way, wish to minimize the importance of capital supply. Let me take an instance from another part of the world. China, 1960. The Chinese program in 1960 broke down for a variety of reasons. But one of the bitterly important ones was that the measure of capital supply—involving certain critical parts, pieces, tools, materials, and engineering skill—which had been made available by the Soviet government in previous years, was cut off in 1960. And not for that reason alone, but for that reason in substantial part, the Chinese economy ground to a halt.

Now, Mr. Podhoretz has offered to get me a dollar a head for every peasant I can find with rising expectations. I shall find a few in a moment. But before I do that, I want to suggest that it's not really important. If you're talking about industrialization and the drive for industrialization and the wish to have an industrial society, the desires and aspirations of the peasants in most countries are of no importance. What is important is that,

though they very often do not will the means, all the alert political leaderships of the most inert countries of Southeast Asia, for example, do desire industrialization. There may be exceptions in Africa, but I do not know a country in Southeast Asia in which it could be said that the political leadership does not desire a substantial element of industrialization. If such a country is to be found, it is to be found in the fragments of the former French Empire in Asia. It certainly is not to be found among the relatively inert peasants of a country like Indonesia, if I take them as an example. And even in the most inert portions of Western Java or South Sumatra, I can find a few million peasants on whom to collect a dollar a head. Of course they don't express their rising expectations by putting forward plans for industrial projects. They express them by holding riots against the Chinese. They identify the enemy and the obstacle with something visible and something intelligible, in terms of the conceptions they have—not in terms of conceptions to which they have not yet attained.

And now I want to leave the acted-upon and go back to us, the actor, and to make this avowal. What we have to recognize when we talk about any form of aid, assistance, or participation in the development of the less-developed countries, is the great gap between them and us—the great gap between our mode of life and consciousness and theirs—our remoteness from them and our unwillingness to merge ourselves in them. There is a wonderful little story of Thoreau's about two people who wanted to travel together around the world—one had equipped himself with a letter of credit and the other proposed to work his way around. Thoreau said that this partnership would quickly be dissolved because one of them was not prepared, in his language, to "operate" at all. Close associations of this kind, he said—and Thoreau was a pre-Marxian—are possible only between people who get their living together. So with us. We can give capital to the underdeveloped countries, of course; we can to a limited extent also give them higher skills and training. But much as we try, we don't participate as equal members in the solution of their political problems. I think we should try, because I wish to make it clear, if I have failed to make it clear up to now, that I am an interventionist, morally and politically: I believe we should intervene all over the world. But there are prudential limitations. There are places where you can't do anything, where you can't accomplish anything, where your reach doesn't bring you into contact with the

problem. You have a moral and political responsibility, but you have to know what you can do and what you cannot do. We cannot provide the higher political direction for most of the countries of the underdeveloped world because they're too far from us. They're too far from us in sympathy, in thought, in intent, and in possession. And the same thing is true of the higher economic direction. It's very rare that we can be of assistance to them in the problems which count most to them and which are most important for their success. Obviously, as we are such indifferent successes in our own society in achieving a fuller degree of economic justice and political democracy, we are in that measure very, very much more incapable of doing these things for others. We have to try, we have to keep on trying all the time, and we have to recognize our limitations.

Podhoretz: Gentlemen, at the risk of sounding sentimental or like an "unreconstructed liberal," I think I ought to say explicitly at this point that behind the abstractions we're using here are millions and millions of hungry people, who live in conditions of squalor and misery that we can scarcely imagine but that we are surely called upon to do something about. Mr. Gass mentioned Jerusalem, which reminded me of William Blake's famous lines about not resting until "we have built Jerusalem in England's green and pleasant land." And I was also reminded of Theodor Herzl's statement: "If you will it, it is no dream." Yet—I know this is an oversimplification—all four of you seem to be saying in one form or another, really, that there isn't very much more we can do; perhaps we should be doing more than we are presently doing, but the difficulties are too great, and we can't.

Gass: We deny this.

Podhoretz: O.K., good. Maybe I misunderstood.

Gass: I don't think any one of us has said that there isn't a great deal more that we can do than we are doing at the present time. Does anyone want to be a volunteer for the position that we're doing everything that can be done?

Morgenthau: It's not a question of more or less, but of the quality of our action. We might do something different.

Podhoretz: As for example?

Morgenthau: Well, I wanted to save this for my rousing conclusion, but I suppose I'll have to say it now. I personally think that if we want to obey

Mr. Lippmann's injunction of offering a third alternative to the underdeveloped nations, we ought to do exactly that—provide another alternative by demonstrating through the qualities of our own society what this other alternative is. For one should not forget that this is not primarily a contest waged with loans or grants-in-aid, or technological help; it is primarily a moral, and if you wish, a spiritual contest. It is a contest between two different philosophies, two different types of social and economic and political organization—two different ways of life. And this contest is not going to be waged successfully by piecemeal attempts at the manipulation of backward economies. Anybody who has lived abroad and has read foreign newspapers realizes how infinitely more important for the outcome of this contest the problem of American race relations, for instance, is, than any amount of money or technological know-how you can make available to the underdeveloped nations. Therefore I am convinced that if one poses the question as Mr. Lippmann has posed it, then the real issue is clearly not the technicalities of foreign aid, but the visible qualities of American society.

Gass: Well, let us now for the first time introduce a note of disagreement. Surely, no one here would suggest that it would be of no value for the United States to become the bright and shining example of a successful political and social democracy. Let us suppose that we have racial integration, we have full employment, we have rapid economic growth, we have correctly apportioned districts, we have fine national political parties. What is the rest of the world to do? To copy from us? To simply fall down in admiration before this great American model that we have furnished? You know, nobody in the world is interested in copying the functional structure of the government of the United States. And if the United States government works a little better, is a little less invertebrate than it has been, it doesn't make all that much difference to a leadership class in Indonesia or in the Argentine, or in any other place in the world that you're willing to talk about. I strongly suspect—and here I'm challenging Professor Morgenthau—that this is one of the easy solutions that we make for ourselves: let us become at home the bright and shining example of a successfully functioning democracy and all the rest of the world will merely follow our noble example. I think that's a fallacy and that if we were to rest with it, we would be greatly deficient in our responsibilities, which require much more positive, much

more substantive action not in the United States—where, it is true, our reach is more effective—but also in other parts of the world, where our reach is much less effective.

Podhoretz: Mr. Schlesinger, what's your reaction to all this? Did I understand you correctly in thinking that you were suggesting that our capacity to do anything about these problems is already being exercised more or less to the full?

Schlesinger: On this last point, I'm all in favor of the moral and social regeneration of the United States. But I'm in favor of it for its own sake and not because I think it's going to solve the kind of questions we've been discussing today. I do agree with Mr. Morgenthau that in the past the foreign-aid program has been regarded too much as an economic and technical program, whereas the conditions for its success depend equally on political, cultural, and institutional factors. I think that this is now recognized and is one of the differences, it seems to me, between what we're doing now and what we have been doing in the past. It's expressed, of course, in the changed composition of the aid program—in the whole approach, for example, to Latin America, which, among other things, puts an unprecedented emphasis in American foreign-aid policy on the production of national development plans by the countries involved and on the use of resources in terms of those plans.

Podhoretz: How well has this new emphasis worked so far?

Schlesinger: Well, producing a national economic plan is not an easy thing to do. I think only three or four countries up to this point have submitted their national economic plans to the so-called "nine wise men," which is a group of economists, mostly Latin American, whose purpose is to advise on the plan, and to try to coordinate the objectives of the plan with the general requirements of the hemisphere. Economic development is never short or easy, and planned economic development is more complicated. I think anyone who thought that the Alliance for Progress was going to transform Latin America overnight had a meager sense of history.

Now as to the question: could we be doing more? It all depends on whether that question is asked in general terms or in terms of existing political realities. Obviously, we could be doing much more—and here I agree perhaps more with Mr. Gass than with Mr. Morgenthau—if we had available for foreign assistance each year eight billion dollars or twelve billion dollars, rather than

four billion dollars. But the political reality is that we're going to be lucky if even four billion dollars is appropriated for the aid bill this year. While it is pleasant to dream how much better it would be if we could make larger capital contributions to the developing countries, the existing political realities just make it unlikely. Nor do I think that this is a matter that can be altered by a fireside chat or by symposia in New York.

Another of the problems of the aid program is its relative inflexibility, and this again brings us back to the congressional situation. The Congress, out of an honorable and natural desire to protect the funds of the American taxpayer, has tried to make sure that the money would be spent as effectively and honestly and intelligently as possible. To do that, they've set up a series of standards, of feasibility criteria, of procedures—which is excellent from that viewpoint. From another viewpoint—that is, of having the requisite flexibility and speed in the disbursement of assistance—it causes many problems. But these are further realities of the situation with which we have to deal.

We have to recognize, therefore, that our aid is going to count as it supplies one missing component and not as the whole works. When a country has everything else—the political will, the institutional flexibility, and a certain amount of economic capital of its own—then our aid can be effective. It cannot be a substitute for things which that country does not have.

Still, it seems to me that with all the complexity of the situation, we have no choice but to do the best we can. We cannot, I believe, retire from this contest. I think injunctions both of statesmanship and of humanity argue against it, and though Mr. Gass is quite correct in pointing out the ridiculous inadequacy of our efforts compared to the magnitude of the needs, it would be equally wrong to regard our efforts as a lot of waste and nonsense. I was in Caracas recently and took occasion to tour some of the *barrios*—the slums—where the people who come in from the countryside live in tarpaper shacks under conditions of extreme squalor. I visited some Peace Corps projects in these slums. I met there a Negro boy from Denver, Colorado, named Jerry Green who has formed a kind of alliance with the local Catholic priest to try to improve educational possibilities and recreational possibilities for the boys. Now this, of course, is a drop in the ocean, and there are only a few thousand Peace Corps boys and girls throughout the world. But the American ambassador in Venezuela said to me that the "image"—to use Mr. Coser's odious word—of the United States has

been transformed more by what the Peace Corps has been doing than by anything that has happened there for a long time.

I have no great optimism about the ease with which these problems can be solved. I certainly do not think that the United States can effectively go around and instigate revolutions all over the world. If a country has the will to achieve its own revolution, the United States should be prepared to work with that revolution as long as it doesn't install Soviet nuclear missiles within striking distance of our shores. And we have done so. We did it, for example, in Bolivia—even, as I said before, with a Republican administration in power. But this glib, 30's-ish notion that making revolutions is easy, or that making national economic plans is easy, or that in a country which doesn't have the capacity to make a revolution itself we can make it for them, seems to me exceedingly remote from reality. I think we have to keep on trying; I think the limitations have to be understood; I think even minor gains within these limitations are worthwhile in human terms; and I think in due course and with an increase in knowledge and collaboration among the various developed nations, we may help quite a number of countries into the 20th century within a roughly democratic framework.

Podhoretz: In other words, as you once put it, Mr. Schlesinger, "Revolution *si*, Communist penetration *no*." Mr. Coser, what about these political realities that Mr. Schlesinger's been talking about? How immovable do they look to you?

Coser: I was a little perturbed by Mr. Schlesinger's continued reference to realities because it seems to me that he here defines reality as something that *happens* to you. Now, this may quite often be so, for individuals. We confront a world that imposes a pattern on us, and we can't do anything about it. But isn't the situation slightly different when you have the most powerful office in the world? Doesn't this precisely give you tremendous power to influence and make reality? And here—even though it may be an "odious" word, I'll use it again—the "image" is an important thing. I think that despite what Mr. Gass has said, if the President of the United States had gone down to the University of Alabama when Governor Wallace said he would bar the door personally against the Negro students—if the President had gone there himself to escort the students, that would have been making reality. And to my mind, at least, that reality would have been more important than almost any number of dollars shipped into all the various Vietnams, Koreas, and Taiwans.

Now let me come back for just a moment to this question of rising expectations. I think there was at the beginning, in what Mr. Morgenthau said, a certain misunderstanding. When we talk about these rising expectations, we do not mean the peasant masses who have not yet made contact with the modern world. We do not mean people who live in terms of the eternal yesterday, we don't mean people still governed completely by traditionalistic norms. We mean those people who've had a chance to institute some comparison between the way they live and the way people in the West live, and who feel that their way—their traditional way—is not the way in which they want to continue. Now here, it seems to me, we again have to stress the role of the intelligentsia, those people in the underdeveloped world who have been exposed in one form or another to Western modes of thought. They are the ones who express the rising expectations. And they, as Mr. Gass has already said, are invariably the ones who push for development, industrialization, and all the rest.

We haven't, in my opinion, talked enough about the intelligentsia here. If one wants a historical analogy, it can be found perhaps in the Russian populists of the last century. Like the populists, the intellectuals in these new countries are deeply attached to certain native traditions—they don't want to shed those—but on the other hand they're also passionately attached to the ideal of breaking into the modern world. Therefore they're often ambivalent, they're often not quite clear as to the direction in which they want to go. And here, if we provide them with some kind of model—as a total political entity or as individuals—they will respond. For here are people to whom we can talk. If we tell them, for example, that one of the ways to achieve the development they so passionately desire without totally destroying the roots of native culture, is to build a pluralistic society, as against the model of centralization that is presented by the East; if we could show them that what is essential is to have a dispersed elite with roots in trade unions, in independent universities, in independent newspapers, etc., rather than an elite that is totally centralized (as the pattern now begins to emerge, let us say, in a place like Ghana)—then, I think, we would have a chance to prevent these countries, which are *not* going to go in the direction of liberal free enterprise anyway, from going in the direction of totalitarian centralization either. But we have to find modes of approaching these intellectuals. We have to talk to them. We cannot, I'm convinced, talk to them if

we simply say: Well, look, these are the realities, and what the heck can we do?

Podhoretz: Mr. Morgenthau, how ineluctable do you think these realities are that everyone has been talking about and that Mr. Coser wants us to use our power to affect? Can we make reality, or can we change it quickly and significantly?

Morgenthau: I think if our ancestors had argued in the same terms of insuperable political realities, we would still be a colony of Great Britain. It is exactly the mark of the statesman that he transforms political realities in order to serve his own purposes. In our time de Gaulle is the great example of a statesman who has not allowed himself to be limited by "political realities," but who has set about to transform them. Certainly, if there was a political reality in France which seemed to be insuperable in 1958 or 1959, it was that Algeria was just another province of France, like Normandy or the Ile de France, and de Gaulle set about by devious—and, you may say, brutal—means to disabuse the French people of this conception of political reality. The congressional opposition to an intelligent and sufficient foreign-aid policy is a political reality in this country today in good measure because of the insufficiency of that policy and because of the lack of Presidential leadership. I criticize the present administration for this lack and I also criticized the previous administration on the same point. In 1956 I wrote a letter to the *New York Times* (which was even printed) in which I said that if I were a member of Congress, I would have great difficulty in voting for the foreign-aid appropriations that successive administrations are always demanding. For they always argue that anything less than the particular sum they are demanding would be a catastrophe for the United States, and yet the appropriation is always much less than they ask for, and no catastrophe occurs. In other words, it is the lack of an intelligent and intelligible American foreign-aid policy which in good measure creates the political reality that impedes sufficient appropriations.

Podhoretz: What would an intelligent and intelligible program look like? Could you give us some indication?

Morgenthau: I haven't got the blueprint with me, but I would certainly say that the philosophy which has been at the foundation of foreign aid so far, and more particularly the practice of foreign aid, have simply been unconvincing, unpersuasive. And I think it is somewhat misleading to make a

kind of statistical inference from the amount of foreign aid spent for economic development and the number of people involved in certain underdeveloped nations, because our foreign aid has been very unequally distributed. Take the example of Laos, to which we have given a total of about \$350 million in foreign aid, of which exactly half a million was earmarked for agricultural development and the rest was squandered in the most abominable fashion. If you want to read a detective story in which all the culprits are identified and yet go free, you ought to read the report of the subcommittee of the House Committee on Government Operations of June 15, 1959. It is an absolutely fascinating and amazing story.

Gass: A good deal of money was spent after that—I mean in Laos.

Morgenthau: All right, but in any case if you were a Congressman and you read this kind of story of incompetence and thievery, you would certainly hesitate to vote for exactly the amount of foreign aid that the administration was requesting. I remember when I was in South Vietnam a couple of years ago, we had established under the auspices of foreign aid a school for radio repairmen, though in all of Vietnam, there probably aren't enough radios to keep one repairman busy. When I was in East Pakistan, they had just delivered a whole collection of super-modern instruments for a tuberculosis sanitarium, without anybody being able to handle the equipment. Now I'm not citing these instances in order to compete with Congressman Passman, whose specialty is turning up examples of this kind of thing. I only want to point to the aimlessness of our foreign aid, of which this kind of thing is indicative.

Podhoretz: Mr. Gass, you spoke before of being a moral and political interventionist, and I think this might be a good point at which to develop the idea. The scandal in Laos that Mr. Morgenthau has just been telling us about might be interpreted as an example of what can result from our reluctance to intervene directly in the affairs of the countries to whom we give foreign aid. Anyway, here is a case that doesn't have all that much to do with cultural receptivity, the amount of capital invested, and the other factors that have been discussed today, but seems to have more to do with our failure to intervene directly. My question, then, is: would it be possible and/or desirable for us to play the role of benevolent imperialists as a corollary to our commitment to foreign aid—however small that commitment may be?

Gass: Well, if I take the case of Laos as a first illustration in the effort to answer your question, then I think it can fairly be said that apart from the lining of private pockets, the program in Laos was generally what you might call a program of military supply combined with mass political bribery. By political bribery, I mean the making available of resources in any effort simply to win immediate short-term political good will. That is a policy which has been followed in various situations by governments throughout history, and generally the person who is bribed stays bribed for a certain time. Sometimes it's a day, sometimes it's a week, sometimes it may be a year—it depends in part on whether there are also bribes offered from the other side, and what's involved. Some years ago, when I was very close to the foreign-aid program and used to talk several times a week to people in the aid administration and in the State Department, I found that particularly among the senior political officers of the Department of State, what I have stigmatized with the name of political bribery was the only foreign aid which they regarded as realistic. Now look, they would say: if you think that you are going to give foreign aid and accomplish economic development, you are a silly fellow; if you think you are going to give foreign aid and accomplish political democracy, then you are twice a silly fellow; but if you think you are going to give foreign aid this Friday to win the concurrence of somebody in doing something that you want him to do for you on Tuesday, you may succeed. This is what I would call the realistic theory of political foreign aid, as it is held in most governments at most times.

Reality on the pedestrian level says that if you're trying to accomplish an object that can be accomplished by next Tuesday, you've got a chance, but if you're trying to accomplish an object in which there are many inherent uncertainties, you'll probably fail. Of course. If it is among our objectives to accomplish far-reaching changes in international politics and international economics, the chance that we'll fail is of course very great: there are lots of other factors. However, though I agree heartily with the great bulk of Professor Morgenthau's preceding statement—which I think is a very wise and very responsible and very important statement with respect to what the obligations and nature of statesmanship in transforming reality are properly conceived to be—I am not quite of his mind on this question of foreign aid and its reception by the American public. I wish I could believe him when he says or suggests that the reason the American public

and the Congress don't give greater support to a more far-reaching, larger-scaled foreign aid effort is that we bamboozle them with all kinds of nonsense each year, or we spend money wastefully in all kinds of places. I think that's wrong. I think the political problem is greater than that. It's not a question of a better administered, more rational program, it's not a question only of Mr. Kennedy or of a number of Congressmen. The real political problem is that the great mass of our people do not actively support such an effort, and the political task is therefore also an educational task that cannot be exhausted by confronting a handful of people in high government positions.

Let me just tell the story of one Congressman I know. He polls his constituents for their views on a variety of questions from time to time. But, he once said to me, I never poll their views on foreign aid. I always vote for the foreign-aid appropriation as asked by the Executive branch, but I know the people in my district are against it. I know they are in favor of me on other grounds and I can stand the margin of their discontent on this issue. Therefore I don't ask them because I don't want to produce a violent surge of No's. I believe that while this Congressman is not acting as a delegate, he is acting as a responsible representative. I believe that he is faithfully discharging his political responsibility, and the political responsibility of the people of the United States in general. The reality that opposes him is *of course* subject to change. It's subject to change by our doing something about it. It's subject to change by our creating greater understanding and willingness. But it is not something in which the fire is properly devoted either to a few political leaders in Washington solely, or to a rectification of administrative deficiencies.

Morgenthau: There is absolutely no difference of opinion between Mr. Gass and myself on this last point. The main criticism I have consistently made of successive administrations was exactly that successive Presidents have not performed their primary task of educating the people in the realities of foreign policy and, more particularly, of foreign aid. So I agree fully with Mr. Gass on this point. I also agree with him on the problem of political bribery. I wouldn't want to be represented here as opposing political bribery.

Schlesinger: Before we forget about Laos, I would like to make the parenthetical comment that one of the first things the Kennedy administration did was to change our policy toward Laos. But going on to some of these larger questions

just raised about the role of foreign aid as a political instrument—it may happen that the thing you want to have done next Tuesday is to get a land reform bill through the legislature or to make other changes of a sort necessary to the longer-term developments you're after. In other words, there's no necessary conflict between the use of foreign aid to get a short-term political result and the longer-term goal of national development. Of course, one of the things that this administration has done has been to change the goal of the foreign-aid program. In the 1950's it was essentially a military-plus-technical-assistance program; it has now become a program designed to help nations toward economic and social development. But the proportions of the program are such, and the limitations of the American contribution (even if this were the largest quantitative program we could get or desire) are such, that in the end the burden and responsibility must still rest upon the nations themselves.

On the question of education about foreign aid, this has not been such a total failure as I think some of the remarks made here have suggested. After all, in spite of the alleged lack of clarity and purpose in the philosophy of the foreign aid program, and in spite of the lack of active support on the part of the electorate, the electorate has nonetheless given a consistent assent to these programs, and year after year has supported appropriations in the order of about four billion dollars. That seems to indicate that the educational campaign has not been a total failure. As I remarked earlier, development is a fairly new issue, and there's been a lot of confusion about it, not only on the part of the political leaders or the electorate, but on the part of the specialists on development themselves. Look at the literature of economic development as it itself has developed in the last decade or so, and ask what kind of consistent philosophy emerges from that. Those who have written most deeply and shrewdly about these problems have still failed to crystallize their conclusions into a coherent and easily intelligible pattern, so it seems a good deal to ask that the political leaders should do what even the economists and sociologists and anthropologists have not yet been able to do. What the political leaders have done seems to me of tremendous importance, and that has been to get broad consent year after year to economic aid—in spite of the scandals that have deformed the program and about which Mr. Morgenthau spoke with such justice.

As to the question of whether this should be the object of an all-out educational effort by the

President—we have to remember that this is a period when interest in public affairs is not at a very high pitch, and the President has to make a choice of how he should employ what attention he can command. In the 1930's the situation was different. In the 1930's we were in a visible crisis which touched every family in the country. There was a hunger for national action and people, so to speak, were waiting for the government to tell them what ought to be done. This is not the case today. And among the priorities, no matter how important foreign aid is, a man of good will might well suppose that political capital should first be invested in the civil rights effort or in the effort to get our economy onto a higher basis of economic growth and to combat unemployment.

Podhoretz: This seems to be a good point at which to throw the floor open to questions. Mr. Beichman?*

Arnold Beichman: Repeated mention has been made this afternoon of corruption in the use of foreign aid by Laos, Taiwan, and South Vietnam. There seems to be an assumption that corruption takes place only or mostly in countries like that, but I wonder whether the panel thinks that there is any corruption involved in giving American taxpayers' money to Communist countries—Yugoslavia, for example, or Poland. Isn't there something corrupt in helping a society which keeps Milovan Djilas in jail? This may be an irrelevant question from a practical point of view, but once we introduce moral considerations into our thinking about foreign aid, then it seems to me that we have to face the issue just as we do when we're talking about right-wing regimes. In other words, are we using a consistent yardstick of moral judgment in discussing this problem?

Coser: I don't think the issue is really one of corruption. Obviously the reason we have been propping up Laos mainly has to do with military policy, and what I think most of us feel is that this is turning out to be disastrous. Laos seems to me a country which is in total chaos, which is fast becoming—all of Indo-China, as a matter of fact, is fast becoming—our Algeria, as Mr. Morgenthau said in his COMMENTARY column a while ago. This is not the case with Yugoslavia. I don't particularly like Yugoslavia, but it just isn't that kind of society.

Podhoretz: Mr. Coser, it seems, doesn't agree

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that a double standard of moral judgment is being applied here. Mr. van den Haag?*

Ernest van den Haag: If, as I believe, the purposes of foreign aid are political, under what conditions and to which countries do the members of the panel think we should *not* give foreign aid?

Morgenthau: I can give you general principles under which I would give foreign aid, but I couldn't give you a list of countries to which I either would or would not give foreign aid. I fully agree with your basic conception of the political orientation and the political purposes of foreign aid, but it is then a question of concrete prudential judgment to say how much or what kind of foreign aid, or whether to give any foreign aid at all, to any particular country at any particular time.

Podhoretz: Mr. Schlesinger?

Schlesinger: Well, I would give foreign aid to countries which can use it effectively and serve U. S. interests; I would not give foreign aid to countries which cannot use it effectively or where the effect of foreign aid would be to damage U.S. interests.

Podhoretz: How about you, Mr. Gass? To whom would you *not* give free money?

Gass: My only distinction from the previous speakers is: insofar as they are stipulating an end which is distinctly political—except in the sense that as a good Aristotelian I regard politics as the master art in the service of ethics—insofar, that is, as they are distinguishing a political end or an end of national interest which is different from the end and object of a proper man at all, I dissent completely and totally. The ends of foreign aid are political, but only in the sense in which the proper end of a society as a whole can be defined as political.

Podhoretz: Mr. Coser, you, I believe, are a Marxist rather than an Aristotelian. What do you say?

Coser: Well, it's of course difficult to specify countries, but I'll take one case: I wouldn't give any aid to Haiti right now. I would in fact give a lot of aid to those people in Haiti who want to overthrow the present dictatorship there. In other words, I believe we have to think not so much about which government as about which groups of people in a society deserve our aid. In some cases, this aid may indeed be channeled through

the government; in other cases, it may be channeled precisely through people who want to overthrow that government; and again, in other cases, it may be channeled through totally non-political or non-governmental organizations.

Podhoretz: Rabbi Hertzberg.†

Rabbi Arthur Hertzberg: I would like to bring us back to the political question in the Aristotelian sense in which Mr. Gass posed it and which I think has so far been evaded. Can we simply and very cosily say to ourselves: We will do what power dictates, we will pursue limited political aims, we will do what may seem to work for American interests at this particular moment, and let it go at that? Is there not an ultimate moral question which is being avoided by this approach, and is there not in that avoidance the contemporary form of the betrayal by the intellectuals of their real responsibility?

Podhoretz: Rabbi Hertzberg, if I understand him, is referring to the millions of hungry people I asked about earlier, and he thinks our failure to concentrate upon them and our insistence on limiting ourselves to political considerations in the non-Aristotelian sense, is a kind of *trahison des clercs*. Would you agree with that, Mr. Gass?

Gass: It doesn't appear to me this particular group of intellectuals is vulnerable to the Rabbi's charge—perhaps at most vulnerable by some inadvertence of phrase. I don't think it's a fair and sympathetic interpretation of what any one of the speakers has said that he would regard the question of the power of the United States as being in the long run the only proper subject of our concern. And since I don't think that this particular group of intellectuals is vulnerable, I'm not going to defend them.

Podhoretz: Who wants to defend them? Mr. Morgenthau?

Morgenthau: I don't know whether I'm vulnerable or not, but I think the question can really not be put in such simple terms—the political interest of the nation *vs.* a humanitarian interest. We are all, I hope, sensitive to the misery which exists in the world and want to see it ameliorated and removed. But if you are talking about the tasks of a government, the power of that govern-

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ment is of the utmost relevance to the issue of the relief and the elimination of misery. For the government of the United States, or the government of any other nation, can only go as far in defining its tasks as its power to achieve those tasks permits. Certainly the government of the United States is not so powerful that it is capable of relieving, let alone eliminating, the misery of hundreds of millions of miserable people. And so the question of what you can do, what you are capable of doing in terms of your moral obligations, determines the moral obligation itself. Otherwise, you would simply be a kind of Don Quixote who tries to do things he cannot do. This is, I think, the position, which, for instance, scholastic philosophy takes when it interposes the requirement of prudence between the absolute obligations of reason and religion on the one hand, and an obstreperous reality on the other.

Podhoretz: Mr. Schlesinger, would you like to defend the intellectuals against Rabbi Hertzberg?

Schlesinger: I hesitate to invoke theology before a theologian, but as a good Niebuhrian, I of course agree with the point that Mr. Morgenthau has made. The logic of Rabbi Hertzberg's position, I take it, is that hunger is an absolute to which everything else must be subordinated. In which case, what are any of us doing in this magnificent building, or eating three meals a day, or anything else? In point of fact, life consists of the balancing of various alternatives. I'm sure that every speaker up here acknowledges very strongly the claim of world hunger, but that has to be considered in terms both of competing claims and in terms of our capacity to meet any or all of them.

Coser: It seems to me Rabbi Hertzberg poses a kind of untenable dichotomy between morality on the one hand and politics on the other. I agree with all the other speakers here that one has, for example, a moral obligation to think politically. You cannot simply say, Let's do something that is good for all the people of the world. You have to ask what the limits of power are, the distribution of power, the channels through which it is possible to act, and so on. All of us try in one way or another, perhaps not very successfully, to apply certain moral standards to the decisions we make, but these decisions also have to flow from calculations as to political advantage, political structures, and the like.

Podhoretz: We don't, it appears, have any utopians up here. Mr. Wyschogrod.*

Michael Wyschogrod: Part of the problem in our relations with the underdeveloped and poverty-stricken nations of the world, it seems to me, stems from an internalization of the Marxist critique of capitalism and the United States. Specifically, we seem to feel deep down that the poverty of these countries, such as in Latin America, is not only a misfortune to be alleviated on moral and pragmatic grounds, but directly our fault as an exploiting capitalist country. As a result, we do not feel satisfied no matter how much we give, and this attitude is soon picked up by the recipient country, which becomes ever more demanding as it discovers our guilty conscience. Do the members of the panel agree that this is a factor in our attitude toward our giving, and isn't it time we got rid of this kind of self-flagellation?

Gass: I don't think it's very important whether we think that the misery of the world is our fault. Nor does the question in any way help me in defining my obligations, or tell me what I ought to do about this misery. As for getting rid of the feeling that it is my fault, I don't think any of us wants to get rid of, or can get rid of, the idea that some of the more abundant benefits of the world come to us by chances not of our making, and are denied to others also by chances not of their making. I think it's wrong for us to consider it our fault, but I think it's not wrong for us to be concerned about the way in which the indifferent universe has bestowed its benefits. If we state our views of obligation monistically—and I'm not saying we should, but if we do—we will incline to say that it is the duty of a moral agent to do what he can to contribute to the good. If we can, having stated our obligations monistically, contribute to the good in Jakarta or Tibet, our obligation will be the same whether we are at fault or not. I think that this whole question, therefore, is not usefully formulated.

Morgenthau: I would like to come to the defense of the formulation of the question. I think it's a very good question indeed. For it aims at the sentimentalization of foreign aid, which is another and perhaps not sufficiently discussed aspect of our attitude toward foreign aid. There is a very widespread sentiment, which is also very strongly verbalized, to the effect that the underdevelopment of the underdeveloped nations is the fault of the rich nations and that the rich nations therefore have a moral obligation to re-

* Mr. Wyschogrod teaches philosophy at Hunter College in New York.

distribute the wealth on a world-wide scale. I myself heard this claim made by representatives of certain underdeveloped nations at a conference in Geneva. And here we come back to that statement of mine that Mr. Podhoretz quoted—that there are bum and beggar nations as there are bums and beggars. I mean there are certain nations whose indolence and a whole chain of other qualities, along with a lack of natural resources, are responsible for the misery in which they live. After all, the wealth in which the United States lives has not come to the United States as a gift from heaven, nor has it been acquired by a series of rapacious excursions. It has come about through qualities of character and intelligence and rationality for which we don't need, perhaps, to take credit, but for which we don't need to apologize either. The natural inequality which exists among men also exists among nations. If I see a bum in the Bowery, I may pity him; if I could do something for him, I would be delighted to do so, but I would realize that even if I gave him all the capital and all the technological aid at my disposal, he would still be a bum in the Bowery.

Coser: I don't think it's as simple as all that.

Morgenthau: It never is.

Coser: After all, when you consider that there are American corporations like the United Fruit Company or the Patino Mine Enterprises operating in Latin America, you have to say that if these nations are bums, we have contributed to their bumhood—or whatever you call it. To that extent, we *are* responsible for their poverty.

Podhoretz: Mr. Friedenberg.*

Edgar Z. Friedenberg: Given the situation described by Mr. Morgenthau in his opening statement, when he said that the only disciplined and efficient force in many underdeveloped countries are the Communist cadres, ought we not take the risk of strengthening that element in certain cases?

Morgenthau: Well, I am personally convinced that in the future there will be many more Communist countries than there are at present, and that those Communist countries will show the same types of difference as we find among non-Communist countries today. We will have Communist countries which are subservient to China, we will have Communist countries which are subservient to the Soviet Union, and we will have uncommitted Communist countries. And what we are doing today with regard to Yugoslavia and

Poland, we will have to do tomorrow with regard to other Communist countries, if we know what our interest is. Certainly we should not allow ourselves to be maneuvered into a doctrinaire opposition to a non-aligned Communism, which may well be the best we can get under the circumstances.

Podhoretz: You're saying, then, Mr. Morgenthau, that the fact that a country has an internal Communist regime doesn't in itself tell us anything about the nature of its foreign policy. . . .

Morgenthau: Certainly not.

Podhoretz: . . . And that its foreign policy is what we're concerned with.

Morgenthau: Yes.

Podhoretz: Mr. Rosenberg?†

Bernard Rosenberg: I'd like to hear some comments on the emphasis we have always put on the military component of foreign aid, and the damage this has been doing, particularly in Latin America. I'd also like to know how our belief in democracy squares with our continued support of military dictatorships.

Podhoretz: Mr. Schlesinger, would you like to comment on that?

Schlesinger: Yes. In the first place, there is, of course, no military assistance in the Alliance for Progress program. There are bilateral military arrangements with various Latin American countries, but this is distinct from the Alliance for Progress. Second, on the matter of our belief in democracy and our attitude toward military dictatorship, this raises the question of intervention. It's no secret that this administration looks forward to every Latin American country having a democratic government. It has said so. The question is how that wish is to be made effective. And it's also the judgment of most people who know anything about Latin America that it's not to be made effective by gross U.S. intervention. This thing is slow; it isn't clean-cut, and it's a question of how you exert pressure.

Mr. Coser brought up Peru. What happened in Peru was that an election took place, which was probably as honest an election as had ever taken place in Peru, but it had an inconclusive result in that the candidate who got the most votes got

* Mr. Friedenberg teaches education at Brooklyn College, and is the author of *The Vanishing Adolescent*.

† Mr. Rosenberg teaches sociology at C.C.N.Y. and is an editor of *Dissent*.

only about 30 per cent of them. The election was then nullified by the military, at which point we suspended our recognition of Peru. As a consequence, I believe, of that suspension, several things happened. In the first place, there was no massacre, or arrests, or anything like that of the Apristas; in the second place, there was a very quick restoration of freedom of the press and, very soon, of political opposition; and third, the pledge was made that elections would be held before June 1, 1963, and these elections were in fact held. So, as a consequence of the suspension of relations, certain important and tangible changes were made in the Peruvian situation. Yet our effort to do this was also resented by a number of countries in the hemisphere who thought that our suspension of relations in the face of a military junta was a form of Yankee intervention.

Everyone tends to see the underdeveloped countries, or to see Latin America, in terms of a series of stereotypes which are more or less sentimental. But I can assure you that the actual situation is very complicated and results cannot be produced by easy methods. Take military aid to Venezuela. Military aid to Venezuela has two purposes: one of them is to enable the Venezuelan government to survive against a number of efforts that have been made by terrorist elements and by opposition elements in the army to overthrow it; and the other is to insure the loyalty of the army to the Betancourt regime. I think that nothing is more important in Latin America at the moment than to defend the government of Venezuela, and if military assistance serves a purpose of this sort, it seems to me justified.

Podhoretz: Dr. Lifton?*

Robert Lifton: I sense a certain impatience here with the fact that so many elements in the world revolution we're talking about are irrational or non-rational. Yet it seems to me that that's what revolutions are all about, at least in large measure. My question is: can we take the irrational factors—social-psychological factors such as Mr. Coser alluded to in discussing the ambivalence of the elites in these countries about industrialization—can we take those non-rational factors involved in revolutionary situations more clearly into account while remaining morally, economically, and politically concerned?

Morgenthau: The statement underlying the question has been going through my mind, too, today. When we speak of the revolution of rising expectations, I think we, to a great extent, project our

own conception of what a decent revolution should be like onto the underdeveloped world. Much of what we call the revolution of rising expectations is certainly a revolution of rising expectations, but the expectations are quite different from what we think them to be, and what we want them to be. And they are really in good measure irrational. Many underdeveloped nations want not economic development in the liberal economic sense; what they want, rather, are the symbols of power—the symbols of having arrived in the 20th century. I have always been impressed with the statement which Nehru made to Chou En-lai—I think it was in '56 or '57—when Chou En-lai visited India, and Nehru showed him a hydroelectric dam and said, "Here is where I pray." And in a less noble fashion, perhaps, you find underdeveloped nations wanting to have an airline of their own which they cannot produce, which they cannot run, and which they cannot maintain. But the nation's coat of arms or its flag must be painted on the fusillage. In the 50's a steel mill performed the same function. It didn't make any difference whether or not it could be used, whether it worked or not; the new nation had to have a symbol of having arrived in the 20th century. The steel mill is now in the process of being supplanted by the atomic reactor. This has nothing to do with genuine economic development, but it is nevertheless an enormously powerful motivating force in the underdeveloped nations. How you can meet this kind of aspiration and combine it with support for genuine economic development, is like asking how you can square the circle.

Podhoretz: Some day somebody is going to square the circle. We have time for one more question. Mr. Gans?†

Herbert J. Gans: Mr. Schlesinger has indicated that the foreign-aid program, and America's relationships with the underdeveloped countries are limited considerably by domestic political realities, and Mr. Morgenthau has accused the President of failure to exert his leadership in this area. I feel that we try to pass the buck to the President too often, and I think that Mr. Gans is closer to the truth in saying that the problem lies in the lack of interest—or hostility—among the American people. I would only add that Congress, too, is at fault. In fact, I think it is not only the underdeveloped areas who must move into the 20th

* Dr. Lifton teaches at Yale and is the author of *Thought Reform and the Psychology of Totalism*.

† Mr. Gans is the author of *The Urban Villagers*.

century, but America as well. My question, then, is: how can we change these domestic political realities, and how can we persuade the voters either to give more support or just greater leeway to Congress and the President in this field?

Podhoretz: That question seems to me a very good opportunity for a coda to this discussion. Why don't we go around the table and see what we can get out of it. Mr. Schlesinger—the view from Washington?

Schlesinger: I think that the problem involves everything—it involves the intellectual community and its capacity to devise the kind of coherent, persuasive thesis for foreign assistance which Mr. Morgenthau is demanding; it involves the newspapers and the political parties and the interested citizens in creating the kind of informed opinion which will mean that Mr. Gass's Congressman will no longer have to be so afraid of taking a poll on foreign aid in his district; it involves the capacity of party leaders and the President to channel and organize that kind of sentiment. But the sentiment has to exist, the President cannot create it from scratch.

Theodore Roosevelt was able to make his great reforms, because for years the muckrakers and the progressive mayors and progressive governors had been educating the nation to the need for reform. Franklin Roosevelt was able to be effective because the Depression created a situation in which all the writers and political leaders and labor leaders helped prepare a body of opinion that could be mobilized by Presidential leadership. Presidential leadership, too, functions when it can supply the missing component. And it requires an active citizenry and particularly requires active intellectual leadership.

Mr. Morgenthau has suggested that Presidential leadership has not been as forceful as it should have been on the question of foreign assistance. I would respond by saying that the leadership of the intellectual community in this country has not been anywhere near forceful enough, and that the kind of situation in which Presidential leadership can operate requires a much deeper commitment on the part of the so-called leaders of opinion in this country than we have yet had.

Podhoretz: The intellectuals are getting it from both sides this afternoon. Mr. Coser?

Coser: Surprisingly enough, I agree with Mr. Schlesinger on one point. It seems to me that if the President is bound by this passive view of

reality and therefore will not give us the leadership that I think we require, then the only other alternative is indeed for the intellectual community to become more active than it has so far been. Unfortunately the intellectual community is not as articulate as the Negro community right now, but maybe something can be done along those lines anyway. I think our discussion this afternoon may have contributed a tiny bit to precisely this task.

Podhoretz: Let us hope so. Mr. Gass?

Gass: Mr. Gans has asked, in substance: What is it that is deficient in the quality of the American political community and what do we propose to do about it? Now, in my own formulation this would go to very important issues like the absence in the United States of what I would call national political parties—to my mind, we have no such; the absence in the United States of the widespread participation of people in politics—to my mind, we have no such; on the more limited level, the absence of anything remotely approaching effective relationships between the Presidency and the Congress of the United States. Here I find the Kennedy administration to be quite as deficient as the Eisenhower administration in the taking of leadership and in the bringing of the Congressman into a true role of participation in the formulation of national policy.

Podhoretz: Mr. Morgenthau, the last word of the afternoon is yours.

Morgenthau: I can only repeat what I have said before and elaborate on it. What has been said in this last round I agree with, but I still would maintain that there is a qualitative distinction to be made between Presidential leadership, on the one hand, and all the factors which have been mentioned, on the other. For there is no single man nor group of men with the same audience and the same prospective influence as the President has who speaks with the authority of his office and the power of his personality. I said long ago to Arthur Schlesinger in private, I have said it in print, and I say it again here: the great deficiency of the present incumbent of the Presidency is that he has not performed that fundamental function which the great Presidents from Washington through Lincoln and Wilson and the two Roosevelts performed in becoming the educators of the American people. Nobody and nothing can be a substitute for that.

LESLIE A. FIEDLER

RACE—THE DREAM & THE NIGHTMARE

DEEP IN the mind of America, if not actually below, at least at the lowest level of consciousness, there exist side by side a dream and a nightmare of race relations; and the two together constitute a legend of the American frontier, of the West (when the second race is the Indian), or of the South (when the second race is the Negro). In either case, it is the legend of a Lost Eden, or in more secular terms, of a decline from a Golden Age to an Age of Iron—as America moves from the time of the trapper to that of the settler, from the era of the great plantations to the days of Reconstruction. What makes the Golden Age golden is, in the case of the Indian, an imagined state of peace between white man and red man, transplanted European and aboriginal at home; love, innocence, a kind of religious, even other-worldly calm preside over this peace. And what makes the Iron Age iron is a state of war between redskin natives and paleface invaders; a burden of hatred and guilt, a history of scalplings and counter-scalplings, revenges and counter-revenges make this war ultimate hell.

For a long time, indeed, it seemed not only a peculiarly but an *exclusively* American nightmare; for though the history of every nation may be, as Joyce suggests, a bad dream from which it cannot awake, each has its own night-time fantasies, as each has its own fate. With the rise of the dark-skinned people everywhere, however, a peculiar white American experience (shared, up to now, perhaps, only by white South Africans) may become the common experience of all the whites of the world. I am talking about our sense of acting out our national destiny in the presence of *witnesses*, involved in that destiny (through fear and hate, we know; through love as well, we hope) by virtue of their color, but by the same token detached from it. It is this special experience which has bred our special nightmare, as well as our special dream.

In a somewhat different form, this essay will appear in Mr. Fiedler's new book, *Waiting for the End*, to be published by Stein & Day in March 1964. Mr. Fiedler is the author of *An End to Innocence* and *Love and Death in the American Novel*, among other critical works, as well as of the short stories collected in *Pull Down Vanity*, and the recently published novel, *The Second Stone*.

This situation is not a creation of Americans, but a pre-condition of their existence as Americans: a heritage from the Europeans who settled on our continent before America itself was invented. With the darker races, white Americans have, of course, inevitably mixed, mingled, even mated, in friendship and in furtive lust; but *they have not assimilated to them*. The three races remain distinguishable in America today—though there are few Indians and perhaps even fewer Negroes without some admixture of white blood, and though culturally (even psychologically, as we shall see) differences once quite real begin to blur and disappear. Indeed, the distinction seems to become for most white men and some colored ones, too, more and more psychologically important to maintain, as it becomes more and more difficult to do so. At any rate, the majority of white Americans at the moment seem unwilling to surrender a distinction it pains them to maintain. What satisfaction would it be, in any case, to reach a time when lines between colored and white can no longer be drawn, if there are no colored people around to applaud it—as there have always been colored people to suffer under and deplore discrimination?

To the two darker races, with whom he must in many places live, the white American is, then, bound by bonds of guilt, older than his national identity itself; and of those bonds he and those races are *both* aware. The white man knows his guilts have long been mitigated by law and statute as well as by kindness and love; but they will not disappear, cannot, he suspects, short of the moment of total assimilation which he rejects for reasons he does not ever clearly understand. And when he has persuaded himself that somehow they do not matter, he sees in the eye of the Negro or Indian watching him (or fancies he sees, it scarcely matters) evidence that they do. The intelligent white man's burden of guilt consists not merely in knowing himself an oppressor but in knowing the oppressed know this, too.

Indeed, in our latter-day, liberal world the weight of reflexive guilt has become greater than that of direct guilt (and it is to this that a recent writer like James Baldwin has learned to appeal). We are aware that the Negro is aware of his long sexual

and economic exploitation; we are aware that the Indian is aware of his expropriation and the disruption of his communal life. And it is their awareness from which we have now come to flinch. For we know even the most rapid advance of reform and amelioration in race relations cannot change it; as long as the Negro remains a Negro, the Indian an Indian, a part of his self-consciousness must be the consciousness of our offenses against him. And so long as we are able to recognize him as something distinctly other from us, we are convinced he must feel himself an other, too. But without a hatred equal to our guilt he would not know himself for what he is—i.e., what we have made him.

This is why we have long not merely dreamed a dream and a nightmare, but dreamed that the colored man dreamed them, too. We long for an accounting which we pray we may be spared, and need somehow to believe the oppressed peoples among us long for it, too. If only they dreamed it, perhaps that would be enough; or if, alternately, they dreamed with us figures of forgiveness like Harriet Beecher's Uncle Tom. If only in fantasy we were united, no matter whether in fantasy of reconciliation or revenge, then we could forgive ourselves. But we do not forgive ourselves. And, indeed, it is hard to know which comes first in the logic of the psyche, which on that level is the cause of which: our not forgiving ourselves, or our not being able quite to imagine the dark-skinned people we oppress forgiving us.

Our greatest literature has always understood what we are just beginning to come to terms with in the realm of social action: that white Americans have from the first hopelessly confused the real Negroes and Indians—with whom they must, for the sake of social survival and civil peace, learn to live—with certain projections of their own deepest minds, aspects of their own psychic life with which precisely they find it impossible to live. Here is the deepest sense in which the oppressor suffers equally with the oppressed, enslaves himself along with those who are his slaves. But to understand it adequately we must be willing to risk a detour (from which some have never returned) into the no-man's-land between politics and psychology.

WHAT WE customarily call "oppressed minorities" (and the same is true when the oppressed are, in fact, majorities) are exploited not only economically and politically, but also *psychologically*; though this latter fact is less noticed in election speeches, newspaper editorials, or even serious analyses of class and race relations, whether pro or con. Oppressors, that is to say, project upon the oppressed certain of their own psychic dilemmas, elements of their own mental life of which they are ashamed, or toward which they are deeply ambivalent. And such projection, it is worth noting, *does*

not work both ways—only from the more favored group to the less favored one; from, say, white to Negro, but not, in a white-controlled society, from Negro to white. So in the Middle Ages, males projected upon females their own longings for lust and treachery, their unconfessable fear and hatred of marriage; so under Hitler, Germans projected upon Jews their own self-hatred and resentment of their demonic leaders, as well as their own most secret erotic impulses—particularly toward children. So adults project upon school-children and adolescents their own denied desire for irresponsibility and sheer dirt; so masters project upon servants their suppressed wish for more disorderly sex lives, less devotion to honor, etc., etc. So, finally, heterosexual males, in our society, project upon homosexuals their own unconfessed dream of aping and competing with women, of turning the other cheek. But in all of these cases, a one-way psychic transaction is involved; there is no equal and opposite projection possible for females or Jews, children, servants, or homosexuals.

Meanwhile the psychically oppressed flounder in their attempts to come to terms with the burden imposed upon them: the obligation—clearly understood or dimly felt or unwittingly suffered—to act out, in addition to their own authentic roles, secondary ones corresponding to the inner necessities of quite alien others. The culture they share with their oppressors demands of them duplicity; and like all who lead double lives, they are troubled by anxiety and guilt. To allay this, various strategies are available to them, all aimed at mitigating or destroying the unendurable doubleness of their lives, by denying either their authentic selves or their projective roles.

In the first instance, we are dealing with the strategy called by American Negroes "passing": the attempt of the psychically exploited to remake themselves in the image of those who exploit them, to assimilate to those exploiters; or at least, to seem to do so. With such an end in view, homosexuals marry and beget children; Jews join the Episcopalian Church; the Irish send their children to finishing schools; and Negroes take out hunting licenses. But "passing" is, alas, impossible to those of the psychically underprivileged who are as clearly distinguishable from the group that imposes its fantasies upon them as, say, women and children; for they cannot, in ordinary course, disguise themselves as males or adults. Indeed, total assimilation is even difficult in America for Negroes and Jews, conventionally identified by certain quasi-mythical physical traits: kinky hair, blubber lips, great hooked noses, etc., etc.

Yet there are, of course, businesses and professions which flourish precisely on the basis of attempts to change or conceal such identifying traits: the producers of skin bleaches and hair-straighteners, or those doctors who specialize in bobbing noses. Where

names serve as additional devices for segregating the unfavored group, name-changing becomes a conventional device: those with conspicuously non-Anglo-Saxon family names, for instance, applying to the courts for others, or at least bestowing on their children names derived from ancient English castles or more recent English poets. So in the 19th century, women eager to write books rather than appear in them as archetypal characters, rechristened themselves as males (usually choosing, for obscure reasons, to call themselves "George"); and so in the 20th, Indians eager to be done with reservation restrictions depend on some conveniently French name to make them seem more *Canadien* than redskin. Finally, however, only intermarriage does the trick, actual physical assimilation; though in cultures where interracial psychic exploitation flourishes, the children of such mixed marriages have still to make the choice of "passing" or not. The unions which produce them may, indeed, be motivated by mythical pressures as well as love (the hunger of one partner for what he has cast out of himself on to the people of the other); and choosing between Mother and Father, the children take sides, or are chosen for one side or another before they have a chance—in the most desperate of psychological games.

There is, however, another order of assimilation, a kind of "passing"—once-removed, in which the psychically exploited emulate in the privacy of their own excluded world, and for no eye other than their own, the behavior patterns of their exploiters. It is as if they sought to prove to themselves their absolute immunity to all the impulses and desires projected upon them by those exploiters; as well as their complete identity with those who consider them completely other—whether those others ever acknowledge it or not. So, for instance, Jewish boys gathered in fraternities dedicate themselves to athletics, hard drinking, and sex, to make clear that they are by no means the joyless scholars, the bodiless "brains," that gentile fantasy would make them. So, too, the members of all-Negro P.T.A.'s in more prosperous neighborhoods gather to discuss juvenile delinquency or the threat of comic books—the ladies in fur scarves, the gentlemen in rimless glasses—to prove their lives are as earnest, well-regulated, and gray as that of any white philistine. So, finally, high-school kids, even from Indian reservations, gather in jackets and ties at Boys' States to hold mock U.N. meetings, to second motions and pound gavels; as if they never "made out" in parked cars, or wallowed drunkenly on illegitimately bought whiskey, or sat with their parents around the bonfires at *peyote* "picnics."

Such "passing"—once-removed often results in parody rather than genuine emulation: an unconscious parody of the solemn idiocies of the social world of the psychic exploiters, which those exploiters find it easy to take as a joke on the exploited.

Certainly, for generations now (up to the recent moment when the N.A.A.C.P. decided to impose its veto on such traditional literary condescension), white American humorists from Mark Twain to Octavus Roy Cohen and the writers of "Amos and Andy" have delighted in mocking the Negro's attempts to re-enact the mores of white society and white business—not realizing how double-edged the ridiculousness of such travesty in fact is.

A SECOND STRATEGY of the oppressed, generally called "Tom-ism" after Harriet Beecher Stowe's much admired and much maligned Uncle Tom, represents a resolve on the part of the underprivileged to be done with doubleness by becoming entirely what it pleases their exploiters to think them, thus abandoning any attempt to establish an authentic identity. So Anglo-Saxon women, for instance, not merely endured but enthusiastically embraced the symbolic virginal role imposed on them by male guilts and fears from the mid-18th to the early 20th centuries; and, indeed, they not merely read but wrote the books which defined for their fellows such archetypal functions. The scornful "Uncle Tom" has been conventionally used to designate only those willing to turn themselves into the images of humility and forgiveness dreamed by their oppressors; but similar satisfactions are provided by those who agree to become the bogeymen of terror and revenge also dreamed by those oppressors. Uncle Tom and Bigger Thomas are not very different in the end; woolly-haired sniveler and black bully both sacrificing the possibilities of authenticity and full humanity, in order to provide "satisfaction and security" for those bound to them by ties of mutual terror. To play the black rapist of D. W. Griffith's *The Birth of a Nation* is as abject a surrender as to play the hero (really an Anglo-Saxon Good Woman in blackface) of Mrs. Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. And precisely such a surrender we see these days in the "beat" young (really Bad Negroes in whiteface), who act out the repressed fantasies of their middle-aged parents in a profitless and self-betraying charade.

Indeed, the woman who turns herself into the pale embodiment of Virtue, the young man who assumes the role of Mother's Helper, the pious black advocate of understanding and non-resistance are likely to seem in the end more disturbingly ambiguous and more truly dangerous to husbands and parents and white segregationists than the dark, passionate vamp, the run-away young rebel without a cause, or the sullen, insolent Negro. For the professional Good Darky, like the Good Girl and Good Boy, the psychic oppressor cannot help suspecting, may be putting him on, pulling his leg; and, indeed, there is a wavering and uncertain boundary between true "Tom-ism" and what homosexuals call "camping"; the flagrant exaggeration of characteristics attributed

to the minority of outsiders by unsympathetic insiders—in order to disarm and mock those insiders.

Who can tell the moment at which the bluff and hearty stage-Irishman, the obsequious and hand-rubbing Jew, the mincing, wrist-flapping fairy, the blond, blue-eyed, dependent girl, the faithful black servitor crying “Yassuh, massah!” cease genuinely trying to assume the humble roles in which they have been cast, and begin to exploit those roles subversively? A recent book by Elia Kazan, finally published under the title of *America, America* was called originally *That Anatolian Smile*—with reference to the placating, insidious show of teeth common to all those who flaunt before their oppressors the humility demanded of them, yet somehow make it a threat. Such a smile represents a first level of slave-revolt—a psychic counter-attack which presages social and political action, but which can be proved against those who practice it in no court. Thinking of all that smile means, James Baldwin has written to Kazan in praise of his book, “Gadge, baby, you’re a nigger, too”; thus recognizing how not only Greeks, like Kazan’s forebears, but all the psychically underprivileged, including Negroes, have learned to tread the dangerous line between being “Tom” and playing “Sambo”: between, that is to say, genuine self-abasement and self-denial, on the one hand, and the secret freedom of mad, mocking “camp,” on the other.

Even “camping,” however, is an activity less than fully human: a slave’s secret revolt that leaves him (even in his own deepest self-consciousness) a slave still; and the joke of composing manifestoes of freedom in code, a language of gesture and speech really comprehensible only to the in-group, soon runs out. What final satisfaction is there in Emancipation Proclamations written in Yiddish which the gentile exploiters cannot read; or of songs of contempt in a jive-talk which the square white masters do not understand? The point is ultimately, of course, to make them understand; and all minorities dream of the day on which they will be able to declare openly their freedom not only from archetype and stereotype, but from the devious strategies with which they have long had to come to terms with their double existence: the day they will be able to boast that they have begun to invent themselves.

American Negroes have in fact reached that point during the last decade or two, not only on the level of mass culture and popular propaganda through the political movement which calls itself the Black Muslims, but also in the fiction of Richard Wright, Ralph Ellison, James Baldwin, John Williams, and William Melvin Kelley. It was, however, in a prophetic little story by a white author, which first appeared in *Partisan Review* for May–June 1943, H. J. Kaplan’s “The Mohammedans,” that the New Negro, the Negro as his own mythologist—comic and terrible at once—entered our literature. And

the younger Negro writers who have followed him have not been able to start from scratch, but have had to construct their images of themselves on models provided by white writers, European and American—by Faulkner, for instance, or Franz Kafka. Nevertheless, Negroes in the United States are coming to exist at last *in their own minds*, not reflexively but directly, despite the images of Aunt Jemima which beam out at them from the boxes of pancake flour, or the pictures of Little Black Sambo that grin up at them out of kids’ books.

And this is perhaps why the old ladies of Harlem, however little they may be able to formulate such an idea even to themselves, hail James Baldwin as he walks along the street—quite as if he were a leader in their political struggle like, say, Martin Luther King. But at the moment that he invents himself, the Negro begins to invent the white American, *his* white American, too; *must*, indeed, invent him out of the scraps he has left over, the human elements he has chosen—painfully or in apparent relief—to discard from his own image. And already there are white Americans who begin to see themselves as “fay” or “o-fay,” as everything the Negro thinks them when he names them so in contempt; just as all Negroes once, and many still, thought and think of themselves as “niggers.”

ONE nail, however, has not yet quite driven out the other; for still in our greatest books, and in our deepest imaginations, we find the old archetypal images of Negro and Indian, and we turn to those images still, eagerly though with diminishing psychic returns. What, then, have and do the darker peoples (not only Indians and Negroes, but Polynesians and Orientals, too; even Mediterranean Europeans, who are half-Negroes to the pallid Anglo-Saxon-Celtic-Scandinavian-Germanic blend that makes up the legendary *Amerikansi*) represent to our pale-face majority? Two things chiefly, closely linked but still distinguishable: nature itself, which is to say the romantic’s nature—the wilderness, anti-civilization, anti-culture; and the impulsive life—the extra-rational part of the mind, which earlier Americans liked to call “The Heart,” but which we prefer to call instinct or *libido* or *id*.

Ask any American for his attitude toward Indian and Negro, and you will discover his attitude toward his own impulsive life; or conversely, find how any American deals with his own basic drives, and you can guess his attitudes toward our colored minorities. The man who “whops niggers” or “shoots injuns” is, symbolically, trying to kill the savage in himself, though he may, perhaps must, at the same time lust for dark flesh. Mrs. Stowe, much more acute than anyone can ever quite remember, knew all this when she made Simon Legree a son of the Puritans to begin with, and portrayed him as pursuing black females when not tormenting black

males. But maybe both, after all, are forms of exorcism congenial to the Puritan mind: whipping and rape—a double assault on the despised natural. There is a curious pessimism in Mrs. Stowe; for though her book may have provided an ideology for abolitionism, it does not really foresee such a solution, ending short of any Happy Ending, even the rescue of Uncle Tom by the White Boy who loved him. For her, love comes too late, here on earth at least; and the reconciliation of Black and White must be remanded to Heaven.

OTHER AMERICANS have, however, if not quite hoped, at least imagined more; for they have known how much depended upon our making peace with the Indian and Negro, on the symbolic level as well as the literal one; Thoreau, who both lived and imagined the role of a white Indian, was one of these. His account in *A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers* of the idyllic friendship between the trapper Alexander Henry and the Indian called Wawatam represents first of all, of course, a desire we all share to achieve social peace and a united nation; but on a second level, it stands for our need to come to terms with the wilderness, into which emigrating Europeans were thrown with a rude suddenness which created perhaps the greatest culture shock of human history: the shock out of which our image of ourselves has exploded. And on a third, the deepest, perhaps the ultimate level, it represents the need of men divided against themselves by the heritage of the Puritans (which alone enabled them to survive that culture shock) to join together their sundered selves: the impulsive self identified with the hostile forest and its inhabitants, the moral self identified with the best they had rescued from the Old World and hoped to preserve in the New.

In the other very greatest American writers, in Melville, for instance, and Mark Twain, even (despite his embattled political position as a latter-day Southerner) in William Faulkner, we discover the full realization that until the American solves what he calls the "Negro" or "Indian Problem," the white American cannot be a whole man. The Emancipation Proclamation we long for is the proclamation of our own emancipation from a genteel rigidity of spirit, the *rigor mortis* of Anglo-Saxon morality; and it is in search of this that Ishmael yields himself to Queequeg, Huck embraces Nigger Jim, and the Boy of Faulkner's "The Bear" makes himself the foster-son of the half-Indian, half-Negro Sam Fathers. Yet none of our greatest writers, however idyllic their celebration of the union of white and colored, is without ambivalence. Elsewhere in *A Week*, Thoreau ponders the tale of Hannah Dustan who was carried off by Indians after her infant had been murdered and who not only escaped from the threat of naked gauntlet or rape but brought back

with her "the still bleeding scalps of ten of the aborigines" whom she had killed in their sleep. Mythicizing this old story, Thoreau continues:

The family of Hannah Dustan all assembled alive once more, except the infant whose brains were dashed out against the apple tree, and there have been many who in later times have lived to say that they had eaten of the fruit of that apple tree.

In Twain, the murdering Indian is balanced off against the loving Negro, while in Melville the loving Polynesian is answered by the treacherous Black; and in Faulkner the representatives of instinct and nature are sorted out not by tribe or race, but by age: post-menopausal colored women and aging colored men playing saintly or even Christ-like roles, in contrast to young and potent Negroes who are cast as demi-devils.

But this we expect, and indeed, find everywhere until very recent times, when political liberalism and the cult of the primitive succeed in driving the dark side of our ambivalence deep, deep underground. Traditionally there have been two contradictory attitudes toward nature at work in the American mind, the "Rousseauistic" and the "Puritan"—the first, as we have seen, expressed in the dream of Alexander Henry, the second in the nightmare of Hannah Dustan. Not only in our literature but in our lives, we have shuttled back and forth between a romantic nature cult and a philistine anti-nature religion: on the one hand, becoming enthusiastic advocates of nudism, and the world's warmest supporters of Freudian psychology; on the other, joining movement after movement against whatever pleases the flesh—alcohol, meat, tobacco, drugs. In fact, we maintain these two polar attitudes not alternately but simultaneously, choosing duplicity rather than compromise, and this, indeed, is the essence of the American way.

Corresponding to each attitude there is, moreover, a program, a kind of politics which creates divisions more fundamental and real than the purely nominal ones which separate Republicans from Democrats among us. One program urges us to *Stamp Out Nature*: chop down trees, kill off buffalo, slaughter whales, rape and ruin the wilderness, join the Christian Science Church. The second cries in answer, *Disappear into Nature*: preserve our primitive areas, guard our natural resources, provide summer camping grounds with real live bears, strip to the buff and lie in the sun. And each of these approaches, of course, entails a corollary program in respect to the Negroes and Indians: the first, *Stamp out the Coloreds*; the second *Blend with Them*. In its most extreme form—as in the case of the Indians, for instance, who have always seemed to us economically dispensable—the negative program is simply: *Kill Them Off*, an American version of the Nazis' Final Solution. And certainly

there rings deep in the mind of anyone who has ever seen an old-fashioned Western movie or read an old-fashioned Western story the folk saying: "The only good Injun is a dead Injun."

But the advance of civilization quite soon mitigated the naïve totalitarian approach with which we began; and *Pen Them Off* replaces *Kill Them Off* as official policy. Especially if there are economic advantages, as with the Negroes, in keeping the underprivileged alive, but, for enlightenment's sake, too, in other cases, it seems preferable to isolate the oppressed in segregated communities, in colonies abroad or ghettos at home, on reservations, in slave-quarters, or red-light districts. The last has always appeared to us an especially attractive solution. In the West, for instance, the early brothels were stocked largely with Indian girls; and even when the gun-fighters we honor had begun to bring in and protect their white replacements, a longing for more local fare remained. Similarly the slave quarters on Southern plantations were notoriously private brothels for the master and his sons; and a taste for Negro women survived their abolition. To make a woman a whore is like making any human a slave; it denies her identity, even reality (especially in a bourgeois world where the human is defined almost wholly by the family group), and ends by making her a thing, a device for pleasure.

Ghettoization has, then, two purposes: to force on those who are ghettoized conditions of squalor which seem to verify the grounds of discrimination against them; and to make them if not unreal, at least invisible. We affect surprise at how "invisible" the German concentration camps were to many Germans; but precisely as "invisible" are the Negro ghettos of New York and Chicago to those who never walk that way; for to be thus "invisible" is precisely the point of their existence. And if, in the United States, poverty has in recent years become "invisible," too, this is because it has tended to become more and more exclusively the lot of those already penned off for their skin color or cultural backwardness. But this is the final triumph of Puritanism, to have ghettoized the unsucces it fears as the outward sign of sin, along with the dark-skinned people who symbolize its own deepest guilts and fears.

ALONGSIDE the Puritan program of annihilation and segregation, however, there has always flourished a sentimental counter-program of conciliation and love. Beside the figure of the Indian-killer, there lives in our imagination that of the Indian-lover; and if the former is likely to be, like Hannah Dustan, a woman, and the latter, like Alexander Henry, a man, this is because we have always sought to keep distinct the notion of a comradely union (which our deepest mind approves) and miscegenation (which our deepest mind ab-

hors). Though we have continued to tell each other in the schoolroom the tale of Captain John Smith and Pocahontas, we have traditionally distrusted the squaw man, the renegade; and the notion of the woman who goes over to the wigwam has until recently stirred on the popular level nothing but horror. In the past, at least, it has been only the dream of a Garden of Eden with two Adams—one colored, one white—and no Eve, that has given us the illusion of "satisfaction and security"; though as early as the 20's, Sherwood Anderson and D. H. Lawrence had begun to express overtly an envy of and a longing for the presumed superior pleasures of dark-skinned sex; and in the 60's the "spade chick" begins, at last, to replace Chingachgook and Nigger Jim as a mythical figure of reconciliation in the novels of, say, Jack Kerouac and Robert Gover.

The recent popular success of the latter's *One Hundred Dollar Misunderstanding* marks, perhaps, a critical point in the evolving mythology of the Negro in the United States. Certainly few would have predicted, even a year or two ago, best-sellerdom for a book which tries to turn Topsy into America's Sweetheart, by glorifying her as a fourteen-year-old black whore, who understands orgasms and drugs, but despises fast cars, television, and war. Gover's is finally a false book motivated less by a desire to tell the truth than by white self-hatred and self-abnegation (his chief white character is a cartoon version of what the "o-fay" imagines the Negro imagines him); but it is not untypical of a moment in the history of our culture, when a young white Montanan can write and believe, after a night of peyote-eating at the bonfires of the Cheyenne: "The Indians are colossal downmen (they are too lazy to write). While we have been playing checkers they have been playing give away. As a result they have nothing but poverty, anonymity, happiness, lack of neuroses, wonderful children and a way of life that is free, democratic and in complete fulfillment of the American dream. . . ."

Yet the myth of an Earthly Paradise for males only has died hard. Not so long ago, in fact, it was for the first time expressed without camouflage or disguise in a popular movie: a film called *The Defiant Ones*, which closes on a scene in which a white fugitive finds peace in the arms of the Negro comrade he has begun by despising, after both of them have been betrayed by an evil white woman. And in Saul Bellow's most recent novel, *Henderson the Rain King*, his white hero flees the world of female love to find satisfaction in the affectionate embrace of a preternaturally well-read black prince. Yet there is a sense, especially among the very young, and those who, like Norman Mailer, speak to them most directly, that the old myth is no longer quite viable in a world in which Indians and Negroes, along with non-whites everywhere, come close to the end of their long indignity. The dream which

began with the trapper Henry and flowered into the mid-19th-century cult of male friendship, seems to many contemporaries too sentimental, or wrongly sentimental, too blandly liberal, perhaps—at any rate, too *easy* to sustain us here and now. And in certain of our latest books, in the whole cluster of works, for instance, called “hip” or “beat,” as in our recent life, we have seen the emergence of a new dream, a new Edenic ideal—pointed toward the future, rather than, as in Thoreau’s case, toward the past.

Yet the new dream begins with the old—in fact, presupposes it; but it goes further, for it not only imagines joining with Indian or Negro in pseudo-matrimony, or being adopted by some colored foster-father—but being reborn as Indian or Negro, *becoming the other*. The *locus classicus* of this altered archetype is Norman Mailer’s essay “The White Negro,” reprinted in his *Advertisements for Myself*. “In such places as Greenwich Village,” Mailer writes, “a ménage-à-trois was completed—the bohemian and the juvenile delinquent came face-to-face with the Negro, and the hipster was a fact in American life.” Mailer is not a notably clear writer, and it seems at first reading as if he were merely talking about yet another sexless union of the races, in which, as he tells us, “marijuana was the wedding ring” and “it was the Negro who brought the cultural dowry,” *i.e.*, jazz, “the music of orgasm.” But he is trying to tell us about something else: about the child born at long last out of that union, about the hipster himself—rebel without a cause, pseudo-psychopath, drug addict, and pursuer of danger: in short, the White Negro.

Here, then, finally is the justification of Thoreau’s boast about the friendship he describes, “so almost bare and leafless, yet not blossomless nor fruitless”: the strange fruit, not of the physical miscegenation so long feared by white supremacists, but of the innocent union of Huck and Jim on the raft. And here, indeed, may be the solution to our deepest guilts and starkest quandary (making possible without further ado even physical assimilation, to which not skin color but cultural and psychological differences have always been the real impediments), the resolution we scarcely dared hope for in actual life, however often we imagined it in books. In light of this, it scarcely matters whether the Negro whom the hipster becomes in his imagination ever really existed at all; for it is with the projection of our rejected self, which we have called “Negro,” that we must be reconciled. Moreover, a new generation of Negroes are presently learning in Greenwich Village, or at Harvard College, to be what the hipster imagines them to be, imitating their would-be imitators. It is the kindest joke our troubled white culture has played on them; and, one hopes, the last.

In any case, the “savage” proposed by Mailer as a model for the hipster is, though he calls him a

Negro, quite as much an Indian; which represents a further reach of absurdity, considering that even some forty years ago, D. H. Lawrence was already able to say, “The Red Man is dead, disbelieving in us,” and that, certainly, few of his remaining representatives ever penetrate the bohémias of America’s big cities in 1963. But Lawrence knew, too, that, contrary to folk-belief, even the dead Indian is not a good Indian; quite the contrary. “The moment the last nuclei of Red life break up in America,” he wrote, “then the white men will have to reckon with the full force of the demon of the continent.” It is not merely that the hipster’s beloved marijuana is rather the gift of the Indian through the Negro, than of the Negro himself; but that, as Mailer reports, those two imaginary Indians, D. H. Lawrence and Ernest Hemingway, are among his “intellectual antecedents,” and that, therefore, he feels himself “a frontiersman in the Wild West of American Night life.” Somehow it has been necessary for white Americans to be reborn as imaginary Indians before they could become imaginary Negroes; and, indeed, Americans were imaginary Indians from the start, our national destiny beginning when certain New England palefaces, eager to demonstrate they were no longer Europeans, put on feathers and war paint to celebrate the Boston Tea Party.

FROM the beginning, there have been in myth, if not in fact, White Indians among us, Crèvecoeur, for instance, asking in his *Letters from an American Farmer*, “By what power does it come to pass that children who have been adopted when young among these people [the Indians] can never be prevailed upon to readopt European manners?”; and crying out in astonishment, “There must be something in their social bond singularly captivating . . . for thousands of Europeans are Indians, and we have no examples of even one of those aborigines having from choice become European. . . .” Even in the movies, Tom Mix and Gary Cooper (spiritual offspring of Natty Bumppo and Chingachgook) preceded Marlon Brando and Elvis Presley (cultural sons of Huckleberry Finn and Nigger Jim); but Hemingway could never tell where Gary Cooper stopped and he began, and may, indeed, have died of the effort to prove that they were one. If the frontiersman was a mock Indian, and the Western movie star a mock frontiersman, what is Hemingway but the White Indian twice removed, out of whose union with the imaginary Bad Negro, the black rapist of the *Birth of a Nation* recast as a hero, the hipster, or at least Mailer’s version of the hipster, has been born.

In our very lives, we have come to repeat this pattern, individual biography recapitulating cultural history. Born theoretically white, we are permitted to pass our childhood as imaginary Indians, our adolescence as imaginary Negroes, and only then

are expected to settle down to being what we are told we really are: white once more. Even our whiteness, however, threatens to become imaginary, as the Negroes we have long mythicized begin to mythicize us; and we think of the embattled whites of Reconstruction days in the South, attempting to assert counter-myths of themselves against those of their former slaves and the abolitionist ideologues. And how comically-pathetically that experiment worked out we cannot forget; intending to appear White Knights out of Sir Walter Scott, the imaginary white men of the Ku Klux Klan in fact revealed themselves as the gibbering and sheeted dead, anonymous ghosts of nameless fathers, able to ride only in malice and in the dark. The White Anglo-Saxon Protestant, appalled at such a prospect, has had, to be sure, the alternative option in the last couple of decades of becoming in late youth or early middle-age an imaginary Jew—modeling himself, in accordance with his politics and taste, on Herman Wouk or Leon Uris, Irwin Shaw, Saul Bellow, or Bernard Malamud. But that option, too, begins to wear out.

In any case, for a long time now we Americans, white or black, gentile or Jew (and the rest of the world oddly follows our example, though without the deep impulses which motivate us), have been somehow pleased to see our children at four or five and ten or twelve dressed, if not actually like Indians, at least like the frontiersman, the trapper, the cowboy: all those who learned from Indians to dress in the skins of beasts, to carry a weapon, stalk the woods, and present to the world the bronzed stolid face, the inarticulate hero's gaze common to Sitting Bull and Gary Cooper and Ernest Hemingway. Wherever jeans go in the world, and they go everywhere that Coca-Cola goes, the dream of the West goes with them; and wherever that dream goes, the drugs we have learned to use from the Indians follow after. First, of course, came tobacco, carried back with them by the sailors of

Columbus, and introduced by Sir Walter Raleigh to the English bohemians of the Age of Elizabeth, wild young Indians like Christopher Marlowe, who added smoking to atheism and homosexuality to round out their sum of sins. And ever since the series has continued without flagging, marijuana, mescaline, the Mexican mushroom—all moving from tepee to high school or college or young man's "pad," as our youngsters at last begin the shift from a whiskey culture to a dope culture; and all carrying with them cancer, hallucinations, addiction, madness: the red man's revenge.

But the boy who smokes "pot" is an adolescent, not a child—which is to say, no longer an imaginary Indian but an imaginary Negro; and, indeed, nowadays, it is the black man rather than the red who is likely to have introduced him to the red man's "medicine." But it is not merely a matter of dope, this affinity of the young and the Negro. Indeed, there is scarcely a father of adolescents in the United States who is not in the year 1963 beginning to be aware (though he may feel it as a pain, rather than know it as a fact) that his sons are in their whole life-style—their speech, their gait, the clothes they wear, the music they love, as well as the vices they emulate—closer to the life-style of Negroes than he could have foreseen on the day of their birth. He may find them, in fact, in posture and in gesture, in intonation and inflection, perhaps even in the deepest aspirations, which, after all, control such outward behavior, closer to the great-grandfathers of their Negro friends, than to their own great-grandfathers—Anglo-Saxon or Italian, Jewish or Greek, Scandinavian or German or Irish or Slav. It is what we have really longed for from the first—perhaps what the story of Alexander Henry has all along meant; but we have scarcely begun to acknowledge it to ourselves, much less come to terms with it. And if we are awaiting the artist who will make poetry of the pathos and comedy it entails, we scarcely know even this.

TRANSLATING THE BIBLE

FOR THE past fifty years there has been a growing feeling among scholars and ministers of religion that the time is ripe for a new English translation of the Bible. Despite its status as an English classic, the King James Version, most commonly in use, is, it is claimed, too archaic in point of language to be readily intelligible, too antiquated in point of scholarship to be reliable, and too grandiloquent and monolithic in point of style to convey a true impression of the tone and variety of the original. The same applies also, it is added, to the Catholic Douai Version, and—though to an admittedly lesser degree—to the Revised Version of the 1880's. All of these renderings, runs the argument, are, in fact, distorting mirrors, and the continued use of them is one of the major reasons why modern man is becoming more and more estranged from the authentic Word of God. If, therefore, the Bible is to continue to be meaningful and relevant, there is, it is contended, an urgent need for a new translation which will be at once modern in idiom and abreast of the current state of Biblical studies.

Several attempts have indeed been made to supply this need. Some—like the Moffatt, Smith-Goodspeed, and Knox versions, or like the partial translations into “colloquial speech” put out by the National Adult School Union in England—have been the work of individual scholars; others—such as the Revised Standard Version, the (Catholic) Confraternity Version, and the New World Translation sponsored by Jehovah's Witnesses—have been cooperative ventures under denomina-

tional auspices. Now, at long last, comes a new *Jewish* version—or, at least, the first installment of one, a rendering of the Pentateuch.*

A translation of the Bible is, or should be, a work of literature as well as of scholarship, and I therefore propose to examine this new version more especially from that angle. To do so, however, it will be necessary first to take a closer look at the general assumptions and principles on which all of the recent renderings have been based. The more one turns these over in one's mind, the more difficult it becomes to resist the suspicion that the new renderings may, after all, have “missed the bus”—or rather the Heavenly Chariot—by confusing literal intelligibility with meaningfulness, and that their dominant preoccupation with modernity of language and philological accuracy may in fact have bypassed, or lost sight of, two far more important considerations. The first is that what really obstructs modern man's understanding and appreciation of the Bible is not so much an occasional strangeness of idiom as a constant strangeness of ideas. The second is that there can, in fact, be no such thing as a definitive translation of Scripture—even for any one age—for the simple reason that Scripture in fact possesses no single definitive meaning to translate. Indeed, it is its very multiplicity of meanings that gives it its universal appeal and makes it an eternal—that is, continually relevant—book.

To take the first point first: the plain truth is that the writers of the Bible—like the peoples of the ancient Near East in general—saw the world in a way very different from our own and were, by and large, innocent of those logical,

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* The Torah: The Five Books of Moses. A new translation of the Holy Scriptures according to the Masoretic text, The Jewish Publication Society of America, 393 pp., \$5.00.

philosophical, and scientific categories which are basic to our own thinking and forms of expression. They had, for instance, no idea of the world as a cosmos or organically unified system; none of nature or what we term laws of nature; and none of Time as a dimension. They had likewise no clear apprehension of organic structures or intrinsic properties, of the distinction between the inherent and the contingent; and they failed, in general, to perceive the relation of form to function—of what a thing was to what it did. They were also without metaphysics; creation, for example, was for them a matter of the shaping or forming of objects, not of the emergence of being from non-being. Natural phenomena, temporal events, and even human actions and passions were regarded as moved from without, and what to us are internal processes were to them the impacts of external influences—the activity and self-expression of an external force and mind, personified as the living God (or, in older Near Eastern thinking, many and diverse gods). *It* did not rain; God rained; it did not thunder: God gave forth His voice. Events did not happen through any mystique of self-determined sequence and inevitability, but by the will and fiat of a supernal God. The “inner urge” of the Israelites to free themselves from the bondage of Egypt and to trudge through the wilderness to a land of their own was articulated rather as the strong hand and outstretched arm of a God who worked *upon* them, not *within* them, and who was “redeeming” them and leading them to a promised domain. Similarly, too, a poet or visionary who stood in a state of ecstasy—that is, momentarily outside of his “normal,” diurnal experience—was deemed to be *enraptured*, seized by God; the hand (or spirit) of the Lord had descended upon him. Aspiration was thus represented as inspiration; emotion as, so to speak, immotion—something injected into a man rather than projected out of him. (On a more mundane level, people did not have stomach-aches; stomach-aches had them.) The human stance was necessarily passive, not active; man did not confront the world—as in the adventurous climate of Greek speculative thought—but was confronted by it; he was ever on the receiving end of God’s operations.

IT FOLLOWS, then, that if the Biblical writers’ views about the world and the human situation—their divinely inspired insights, if you will—are to be meaningful and relevant to modern man, and not mere antiquarian relics, this different climate of being and frame of mind have first to

be recaptured, and the imagery and idiom in which they are expressed then to be translated or transmuted, so far as possible, into the patterns of modern man’s own mentality and the terms of his own experience. (This does not mean, of course, that the Bible has to be “de-theologized,” but simply that one has to recognize what, in terms of event and experience, its picture of God and God’s activity really stand for.) The trouble is, however, that not all of the Bible’s ideas and concepts lend themselves readily to such reformation, while the average layman today is in any case rarely equal to the task.

And the task is made even more difficult by the fact that ancient Hebrew thinking differed from ours in manner as well as matter. Many things which the modern Western mind absorbs or digests by means of empirical observation and logical synthesis were envisaged and expressed by the writers of the Bible through poetry and impressionistic imagery; and the latter in turn was often drawn from traditional mythology. Accordingly, the modern reader has not only to identify the underlying myths—a matter of straight literary and archaeological exegesis—but also, and more importantly, to “decode” the mythological metaphors and to extract the universal significance from the particular form of its articulation. In Biblical thought, for example, the world begins with the breath of God sweeping or coasting over the primordial waters, and its present phase will end with the Lord’s subduing Leviathan, “the evasive serpent” (Isaiah 27.1). Both are mythological images.

On the level of purely literal interpretation, the one can be elucidated by pointing out that the breath of God is simply the wind and that this is therefore nothing but a linguistic survival of a widespread ancient and primitive myth which portrays the wind as a bird in flight; while the other may be readily recognized as an adaptation of an older Canaanite myth (now known from the texts discovered at Ras Shamra, in Syria) in which Baal is said to conquer the dragon Leviathan in order to assert his dominion over the earth. Neither concept, however, can become really meaningful or relevant to modern man unless and until it is “de-mythologized” and reformulated in his mind in terms of what it symbolizes and ultimately implies. (Such “de-mythologization” does not mean, of course—as is often supposed—that the Bible has to be shorn of its mythological elements before it can be acceptable, but simply that these have to be translated in the mind from the explicit into the implicit, from par-

ticular image to general import, and that one has to recognize poetry and myth, and not only rational and logical statements, as valid media of predication.) It is obvious, however, that this entails far more than mere modernization of language or philological precision; what is involved is mental as well as verbal translation.

Scarcely less formidable than the difficulty of understanding the Bible is that of translating it. The main problem here is that of *meaning*. The meaning of any work of literature is, in the final analysis, simply a junction between the intent of the writer and the experience of the reader, and is therefore necessarily variable—a product, as it were, of reading into the text as well as out of it. A translator, however, cannot possibly exhaust all the potential meanings capable of being achieved by all potential readers; the most that he can do, in practice, is to reproduce those facets of meaning which happen to present themselves to his own particular mentality. Hence, every translation is necessarily restrictive, and none can be definitive. Indeed, the adequacy (in the etymological sense) of any rendering will be proportionate to the extent to which it manages to preserve the plasticity of the original—that is, to use words as spectra rather than strait jackets.

Moreover, the translator is confronted not only with the problem of the variability of meaning but also with that of its different *levels*. The Bible has a wider as well as a narrower meaning, an implicit as well as an explicit sense, a connotation as well as a denotation, an ultimate significance as well as an “immediate” purport. Accordingly, to couch a translation in terms which express only the former but convey no intimation of the latter is to spill at least half of the content. Take, for instance, such a verse as Psalms 68:6. To render this slavishly, as does the King James Version, *God setteth the solitary in families [literally, a house]: he bringeth out those which are bound . . . but the rebellious dwell in a dry land*, is to remain imprisoned within a metaphor, for what the passage, in its wider meaning, is really saying is that the apprehension of what is meant by “God,” the existential recognition of His being and omnipresence—almost the mystic’s “unitive state”—automatically puts an end to man’s rootlessness and bursts the fetters of his human condition. God is Himself a home, not a supernal housing administrator; a spirit of release, not a parole officer. Those, however, who reject this experience are doomed, just as automatically, to a barren, unfructified existence (*Mine, O thou Lord of life, send my roots rain*).*

The ancient rabbis saw all this clearly enough. “The Torah,” they declared, “has seventy faces.” “The Word of God is a hammer on rock, sending forth countless sparks.” “The Law was written by God in black flame on white flame.” “He who translates a verse of Scripture literally is a liar.”†

With contemporary Bible scholars, however, it is far different. The spate of archaeological discoveries on the one hand, and the increase of philological resources on the other have shifted both their training and their interest into other channels, and with this there has developed a less than casual attitude toward basic problems of hermeneutics—that is, the theory and philosophy of interpretation. Indeed, if one ventures today to raise these issues among Bible scholars, one is usually met, amid embarrassed shuffles of incomprehension and gestures of supercilious disdain, with the objection that one is talking “meta-semasiology,” or trying vainly to find “meaning behind meaning”—an objection which is itself meaningless unless the limits of semasiology proper are first defined and unless clear distinctions are preserved between meaning and tenor, sense and significance, denotation and connotation, import and implication.

IN SUCH a climate, it is not surprising that the art and task of translation should likewise be misprized and come to be confused with mere lexical equivaluation—that is, the matching of words in one language with those in another. Words, however—as everyone knows—are mere approximate symbols for convenience of communication, so that to pair words in two different languages is not really to determine or reproduce their meaning in either. It is, for instance, quite erroneous to suppose that the meaning of the first verse of the Bible is faithfully reproduced by the rendering, *In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth* (or even, *When God began to create heaven and earth*). This is simply a lexical equivaluation, for the fact is that its essential words—*God* and *create*—are charged in current English speech with associations appreciably different from those

* Unless otherwise indicated, translations are my own.

† To be sure, in matters of law and commandment, the rabbis *did* admit of a single, authoritative interpretation reached by consensus, and even inveighed against individualistic exegesis; but the very purpose of this was to establish a practical norm just because they recognized that meaning *per se* was variable. Indeed, if they admonished us, for purely legal (*halachic*) purposes to “make a fence around the Torah,” they did so precisely because they realized that of itself the Torah has none.

possessed by the original Hebrew terms. (A *shofar* is a *shofar*, and a rose is a rose is a rose.)

Nor is it only in the matter of semantics that the new translations of the Bible appear to fall short. Equally open to challenge are their premises concerning language and style.

No one, of course, will quarrel with the contention that the English version should be brought abreast of current Biblical scholarship and that the Scriptures demand to be retranslated periodically in order to render them intelligible to successive generations. But the question—raised in the Preface of the new Jewish translation and in advance releases put out by the editor-in-chief—of the desirability of removing the archaic flavor of the King James Version is not one so easily disposed of. To the point that, after all, the Hebrew authors did not write Elizabethan English, there is the obvious retort that neither did they write 20th-century English. The real question here is not simply one of archaism or modernism, but of which form of English is best suited to convey the spirit of the Hebrew in any particular case; and one may suggest that at times the simpler, more naïve, less sophisticated language of the King James Version provides a better literary vehicle in this respect. There is also the further point to be considered that, as Rudolf Otto pointed out, archaic diction, like archaic architecture, is often charged with an inherent “numinosity” by no means foreign to any product of the religious spirit.

It seems, then, impossible to escape the conclusion that, however scholarly and verbally felicitous the new translations of the Bible may be—and undoubtedly are—their basic premises and assumptions are nevertheless open to serious question, and the frame of mind in which they have been executed is deficient in philosophical perception and in certain qualities of sensitivity.

So, by way of general introduction, we come specifically to the new translation of the Pentateuch recently issued by the Jewish Publication Society. This new rendering is the combined work of three eminent Jewish Biblical scholars, professors Harry M. Orlinsky of the Hebrew Union College (editor-in-chief), H. L. Ginsberg of the Jewish Theological Seminary, and Ephraim A. Speiser of the University of Pennsylvania. They have been assisted in their task by “three learned rabbis familiar with the use of the Bible in the synagogue and home” and “belonging to the three sections of organized Jewish religious life”—that is, the Orthodox, Conservative, and Reform—and by the experienced general editor of

the Society. The translation does not lay claim to any “official” authorization or sanction—being simply a venture of JPS—nor can it even claim to represent the consensus of Jewish Biblical scholarship in this country; the majority of Jewish scholars were neither consulted nor invited to cooperate.

Let it be said at once, however, that the translation is a notable and important achievement. Its editors themselves, in the eminence of their scholarship, provide us with a sufficient guarantee of the actual “accuracy” of their rendering. And on page after page one comes upon ingenious and probable solutions of notorious difficulties. Moreover, the version is distinguished by many felicities. True, one must give up certain cherished images: Joseph no longer possesses a “coat of many colors” (rather, an “ornamented tunic”), the Red Sea becomes the Sea of Reeds, and so on. But these changes are trivial, and against them stands the readability of many passages hitherto somewhat obscure.

NEVERTHELESS, with all its excellences and clarifications, one misses in this version the *magic* of the Bible. By that I do not mean sonorousness or mellifluence, for these have to do only with sound, and I am talking about style. I mean the verbal tact, the economy of statement, the pregnancy of phrase, the ability to catch a scene in a sentence and a situation in a word, the tints and shades. It is these things to which, for all its scholarship, the new version seems somehow insensitive. The translators appear, in fact, to have plumped for accuracy at the expense of fidelity. By accuracy I mean the reproduction of verbal symbols in one language by their most commonly accepted approximates in another; by fidelity I mean the process of catching the experiences which those symbols articulate, of reproducing the style and artistry with which they are manipulated, and of transmitting the “thrill” of the original creation.

Esau, “a man of the field,” comes home and asks Jacob for a swallow of food, “for I am weary” (Genesis 25:30). In the new translation he is “famished”—and instantly the vivid contrast dissolves between the strenuous, sweating hunter, dog-tired and exhausted, and the quiet stay-at-home calmly cooking his stew. Jacob talks in terms of a deal over birthright. Esau is too tired to discuss it. “What have I to do with birthrights when I am half dead.” And again the perfect economy of statement: “So he ate and drank,” says the Scripture, “and got up and went.

Esau made light of the birthright." He held it cheap, disregarded it, had no time for it. In the new translation, he *spurned* it; once again the point and effect are ruined.

The Israelites are standing before Sinai. They hear the thunder and see the lightning, and now the writer wants a word to describe the sudden reaction of the crowd. Once again, his choice is perfect. "*Wa-yanu'u*," he writes, "they were shaken" (Exodus 20:15), which is the word used in Hebrew not only of men staggering in bewilderment (and even in drunkenness) but also of trees swept by a sudden wind (cf. Isaiah 7:2). *They fell back*, says the new version, and the pictorial power is lost.

Coming nearer and nearer to the Promised Land which he knows he himself will never enter, Moses seeks in a last desperate effort to bring his plebeian horde of ex-slaves to a sense of historic mission, to infuse into them an apprehension—perhaps only a glimmer—of his own vision of what the Going Forth from Egypt really means. "Behold," he says, in the simplest and most homely of words, "the Lord our God made us see His glory and His greatness" (Deuteronomy 5:21 [24]). What might have been a mere theoretical concept has been made manifest in event and experience; men have not been left to speculate about God; they have seen Him in their own lives, in what has happened to them, in the adventure of the great trek. The new translation, however, says in effect that here is simply the figure of speech known as hendiadys, whereby two words are used for one thing. God's glory is simply His radiant presence, and the reference is simply to the grandiose visual effects at Sinai: "He has just shown us His majestic Presence"—and the glory is gone.

Moses pronounces his final blessing over the tribes of Israel. But before describing their several fates and fortunes, he reminds them of the supreme experience which has been common to them all and which unites them in a single destiny: God has revealed Himself to them. Bald statement, however, is not enough: the Lord burst upon Israel like a morning sun. The imagery is exquisite: "The Lord emerged from the top of Sinai, he dawned from Seir, he climbed beaming from Mount Paran" (Deuteronomy 33:2)—the last verb being that normally used of the rising orb. He "appeared," says the new translation in an inexplicable flattening.

Closely connected with the translators' insensitivity to poetic imagery is a certain lack of finesse in appreciating the stylistic effect or significance

of particular words in particular contexts. There are some telling examples of this in the rendering of the Song of the Sea (Exodus 15). The Song begins in the Hebrew with a vivid contrast between the loftiness of the Lord, Who, so to speak, has been riding high, and the abasement of the Egyptians, plunged into the depths. The words are pointed: "I would sing unto the Lord for He rode, oh so high, whereas horse and driver He flung into the sea." The new version, following the old, retains "For He has triumphed gloriously" in place of "for He rode, oh so high."

In verse 13 of the same Song, the whole artistry of the Hebrew is destroyed by a similar lack of perception. The Hebrew says that God led the people whom He had redeemed and guided them to his *naweh*. Now, the point here is that the two verbs refer especially to leading a flock, while the word *naweh* means "pasture" as well as "abode." The idea is, therefore, that of God's leading His people like a shepherd, bringing them finally to settle on his own hillside. To render it as "In your love You lead the people You redeemed, in Your strength You guide them to Your holy abode," thus loses the metaphor, and with it, the power of the religious imagination.

A RELATED tendency is that toward what I may call narrowing the ambit of certain words. Thus, in the "*Shema*" (Deuteronomy 6:7), we are told to preoccupy ourselves with the words of God and to "talk of them when we sit in the house, when we walk by the way, when we lie down, and when we rise up." But the translators insist that we are to "recite" them, not just talk of them—thus turning a preoccupation into a ritual.

Sometimes, too, the poetry of a phrase is constricted in the same way. The magnificent hyperbole of "the heavens and the heavens of the heavens" (Deuteronomy 10:14) becomes simply "the heavens to their uttermost reaches." The "bewilderment [RV "astonishment"] of heart" which, along with raving and blindness, is the lot of those who heed not the word of the Lord (Deuteronomy 28:28), is diluted to "dismay"—with the whole agony of wavering uncertainty, the whole, if you will, nightmare of secularism, drained out of it.

Again the treatment as hendiadys of pairs of words each of which really possesses distinctive significance occasionally robs certain passages of their full import. Moses tells the Israelites, for example, that if they hearken to God's commandments and perform them, He will in each individual case (the pronouns change wonderfully

from plural to singular) "observe the covenant and the *hesed* which He has shown to their forebears" (Deuteronomy 7:12). The new translation renders it "the gracious covenant," but this is short change; *hesed* is not a quality of pacts themselves but of those who keep them; it is loyalty and devotion to a friend or ally, and it is this constancy of obligation, and not only the fulfillment of the pledge, that God offers.

WHAT I am objecting to, then, is the translators' insensitivity not only to the imagination and imagery of the Biblical writers, but also to their artistry and style. Not infrequently, the nuances of their phrasing—that is, the special effect of particular words—is unnecessarily curtailed, as when the enemy, which will "march out against you by one road and flee by *seven* roads" (Deuteronomy 28:7,25) is now said to beat its retreat simply by "many roads." Again, Jacob is described in this version as a "mild man who stays in camp" (Genesis 25:27) in contrast to Esau, who is "a man of the outdoors." But the Scriptural writer calls him simply "a plain" man: the contrast not meant to be that between gentleness and ferocity but between adventurousness and domestic tastes. A good writer uses words as an artist uses colors, and a translation which fails to reproduce their timbre and nuance is like a black-and-white reproduction of a Turner sunset.

Sometimes, too, this insensitivity robs a passage of its wider meaning and suggestion. Here is a particularly arresting example. The Israelites are facing the revelation at Sinai. They sense that behind the thunder and lightning a living God is speaking to them. This, and not only the convulsion of nature, fills them with alarm. Their leaders and elders approach Moses. "What flesh," they ask, "has ever heard the voice of a living God speaking out of the midst of fire, as we have this day?" (Deuteronomy 5:23 [26]). Now the contrast here is certainly intended as one between mortal man and immortal God, but to use the word "mortal" instead of "flesh" (as the new translation does) is to sacrifice the wider for the narrower phrase: in the ultimate, as distinguished from the proximate sense, what is being said is that the carnal impedes apprehension of the spiritual.

But perhaps more serious than the shortcomings of poetic sensitivity in the new version is the way it occasionally indulges in curious modernizations of ancient religious ideas. The Two Tablets, for instance, are described in the original Hebrew of Exodus 32:16 as being "God's work" inscribed

with "God's writing," where the meaning is simply that they were not of human manufacture nor engraved with human script; they were something "out of this world"—this expression being in fact a linguistic relic from pagan speech. But this is softened down to "God's work" and "God's writing." (If that had been the meaning, one would have expected the writer to have used the Tetragrammaton, as elsewhere throughout this chapter.) Again, the prohibition in Deuteronomy 18:10, against the heathen practice of "passing one's son or daughter through fire" is distorted into a veto on "consigning" them to fire. But regardless of whether the custom of burning children alive was or was not a contemporary pagan usage (and there does seem to be evidence that first-born sons were sometimes burned in honor of the god, Hadad), the reference here may well be to the widespread custom of passing newborn babes or infants through flame as a means of "saining" them or protecting them from evil spirits. The classic example is the Greek Triptolemus in the Homeric Hymn to Demeter, but, as Frazer and others have shown, the usage is world-wide and survives even today in European folklore.

Another instance of the same thing occurs at the end of the Priestly Benediction (Numbers 6:27) where the Hebrew words, which mean literally, "And they shall place my name upon the children of Israel, and I will bless them," are rendered, "Thus they shall link my name with the people of Israel," etc. This, I think, actually distorts the sense. The phrase, it seems to me, is based on the ancient concept that the name is not merely the verbal appellation of a person, but represents his outward as distinct from his inner personality. When, by the mystique of the priestly benediction, the divine aura is diffused over the people, it may be truly said that the Lord is transmitting *berakah*—that is (properly), a special providential influence—to them. This, rather than the idea of linking names (in our sense) is, I suggest, what is really meant, and that is the real point of the priests' mediation.

In a few instances, too, the translation seems to be doctrinally squeamish. Thus, in Numbers 23:19, Balaam is made to declare, "God is not a man to be capricious [n]or mortal to change his mind," where the Hebrew says more bluntly, "God is not man that he should lie, nor mortal that He should relent." Again, in the story of the Golden Calf, where the Hebrew says clearly (Exodus 32:1) that the people asked Aaron to "make us gods who shall go before us," this is

toned down to "Make us a god," although in the succeeding verses Aaron exclaims, "These are your gods." (A footnote, however, smuggles in the alternative, "This is your god.")

THERE IS an old rabbinic maxim that whenever the prophets found cause to castigate their people they invariably appended words of cheer. "I am no prophet, neither the son of a prophet," and what I have here attempted to say has been said in a spirit of critical discussion, not of arrogant castigation—a distinction which, in these unredeemed times, is all too often overlooked.

Nevertheless, I should like to follow the old tradition and to say in conclusion that, however much one may dissent in point both of principle and of detail, this new translation must indeed claim the admiration and gratitude of us all. Its three editors are singly and collectively a glory of contemporary American Jewish learning, and, from the point of view of sheer scholarship, so is the present work. One can only hope that the religious and intellectual "translation" of the Bible will one day soon be attacked with the same devotion that has characterized the making of this new version.

Coming in COMMENTARY

A series of major articles by Oscar Gass on Russia under Khrushchev, which will deal with such matters as the new structure of Soviet government, the USSR's economic prospects over the next twenty years, and the future of Soviet-American relations.

Bruce is doing today in public had been done for years in private, not only by him, but by dozens of amateurs all over New York City—at private parties, on street corners, in candy stores. His originality consists in his having been the first to use this private urban language in public, and his genius lies in his ability to express the ethos out of which he comes in unadulterated form.

He is, in other words, a genuine folk artist who stands in a relation to the lower-middle-class adolescent Jewish life of New York not unlike that of Charlie Parker to the Negroes of Harlem. And like Parker, he derives his strength from having totally available to himself—and then being able to articulate—attitudes, ideas, images, fragments of experience so endemic to a culture that they scarcely ever come to conscious awareness. Thus for many people the shock of watching Bruce perform is primarily the shock of recognition.

Bruce—who grew up in Brooklyn, the son of an “exotic dancer” who now runs a school for strippers and coaches comics—grew up as part of the adolescent “underground” that exists beneath the lower-middle-class gentility of such Brooklyn neighborhoods as Bensonhurst, Borough Park, and Brighton Beach. Adolescent defiance is scarcely unique, but the group of which Bruce was a part acted out its anger not only by rubbing shoulders with the socially outlawed (pushers, prostitutes, loafers, show-business types, Negro jazzmen) but also through staging sessions of ritualistic parody in which they vented their contempt for the life around them. On Saturday nights, for instance, they would get together and everyone would have his turn “onstage” to review the events of the week—each performer egging himself on to greater heights of exaggeration, outrage, and sheer fantasy in describing things that had happened in the family, in the neighborhood, and in the dark sexual corners of their world. It was in this “home-cooking” school that Bruce learned how to free-associate on his feet, and it was here also that he trained himself in the technique of the “spritz”—the spontaneous satire that gathers momentum and energy as it goes along, spiraling finally into the exhilarating anarchy of total freedom from inhibition.

The psychological mechanism of this kind of comedy is well enough known by now: it is a means of expressing hatred and contempt and still escaping punishment. But the matter is complicated by the fact that the comic’s sensitivity to imperfection and ugliness is heightened by a conviction of his own inadequacy, vulgarity, and

hypocrisy, leading him to become doubly intolerant of these faults in others. They haunt him; they are demons which he seeks to exorcise by comic confrontation. The psychological source of such satire is, thus, a persistent, ineradicable hatred of the self, and this is particularly striking in the case of Bruce, whose sense of moral outrage is intimately connected with an awareness of his own corruption. (“I can’t get worked up about politics. I grew up in New York, and I was hip as a kid that I was corrupt and that the mayor was corrupt. I have no illusions.”) If the practitioner of this kind of comedy is in any way morally superior to his audience, it is only because he is *honest*, and willing to face himself, while they, the audience, are blind enough to think *they* are pure.

From Brooklyn, Bruce went into the Navy, was discharged at the end of the War, and after serving a hitch in the Merchant Marine, returned to New York where he submerged himself in the show-business jungle of Times Square. For several years he moved around digging other comics, haunting their hangouts, trying to work out an act of his own. Finally, in 1951, he appeared on the Arthur Godfrey Talent Show and won. Soon he was doing a conventional “single” at the Strand and other burlesque houses, but he loathed “the business” as much as he depised the Brooklyn of his youth, and for many of the same reasons.

THE decisive moment for his career came in 1958 while Bruce was working on the West Coast as a screen writer and nightclub emcee. At about this time Mort Sahl, also on the Coast, was becoming famous. (“I was just a product of my time,” Sahl has said. “This license was lying around waiting for someone to pick it up.”) Nevertheless, the novelty of Sahl’s act undoubtedly stimulated Bruce’s own breakthrough and there was an audience ready to respond to Bruce’s first original creation—a series of satirical bits based on a potent symbol evolved in the early “home-cooking” days—the shingle man.

A type of “con” man prevalent in the 40’s, the shingle man spent much of his time on the road, usually traveling in groups, doing comic routines, smoking marijuana, taking time off now and then to talk gullible slum residents into buying new roofing. Though strictly a small-time operator, the ruthlessly manipulating shingle man came, in Bruce’s universe, to represent any and all wielders of power and authority—up to and including the most grandiose. The great world, in short—all political, social, or religious activity—is nothing

but a gigantic racket run by shingle men. In a Bruce routine called "Religion, Inc.," for example, organized religion was reduced to a three-way phone conversation between the Pope, Billy Graham, and Oral Roberts making plans in hipster jargon ("Hey, John! What's shaking, Baby?") for a world-wide religious revival complete with giveaway items (a cigarette lighter in the form of a cross and cocktail napkins bearing the imprint, "Another martini for Mother Cabrini").

Similarly, in another routine of this period, Bruce portrays Hitler as the brainstorm of a couple of shrewd theatrical agents, who discover the new "star" while he is painting their office and set him up with costumes (an armband with the four "7's"), music, routines—in short, an act. Lavishly applying the metaphor of the shingle man to every social institution in the book, Bruce embarked upon a career whose underlying intention has remained constant, though his style has gone through many changes: to set up a remorselessly unqualified identification of power and respectability with corruption.

It is a mistake to regard Bruce simply as a social satirist, for he has long since transcended the limitations of that role, just as he has long since gone beyond mere irreverence in his routines. Indeed, for the most apposite metaphor describing what Bruce does, one must turn from show business to the seemingly remote domain of cultural anthropology. Géza Roheim's description of the *shaman*, exorciser of public demons, sharply reveals the true character of Lenny Bruce's present "act." "In every primitive tribe we find the *shaman* in the center of society and it is easy to show that he is either a neurotic or a psychotic, or at least that his art is based on the same mechanisms as a neurosis or psychosis. The *shaman* makes both visible and public the systems of symbolic fantasy that are present in the psyche of every adult member of society. They are the leaders in an infantile game and the lightening conductors of common anxiety. They fight the demons so that others can hunt the prey and in general fight reality."

ALTHOUGH "sick" humor appears to be a remarkably unfeeling reaction to misery, particularly to physical deformity, it actually is an oblique protest against the enforced repression of those instinctive emotions of revulsion, anxiety, and guilt evoked by deformity. It represents a distorted rebellion against the piety that demands automatic sympathy for literally every form of

human limitation. Though neither Mort Sahl nor Bruce can be wholly identified with "sick" comedy, the shock techniques used by both gave them something in common with the outrageous jokes that were spreading through the country during the mid- and late 50's. (With Sahl, also, Bruce shares other things—the technique of the encyclopedic monologue, the courage to deal in forbidden subjects, the use of hipster language, and an obvious identification with the jazz world.) For a time Bruce's act was sprinkled with "sick" jokes, but they never constituted more than a small portion of his verbal arsenal.

Unlike Sahl, however, whose specialty is political satire, Bruce has never had much to say about politics; the abuse is too obvious. There is a further difference: Sahl is primarily a wit and a social commentator; while Bruce's imagination is a more creative one, which has enabled him to produce a remarkable variety of characters, situations, and lines of comic action. The next stage in Bruce's development saw the shingle man superseded by a richer, more personal metaphor—show business itself. Balancing his own profound self-contempt against his loathing for the "business," Bruce created his most complex parable, a routine called "The Palladium." A cocksure little nightclub comic, crude, untalented, but "on the make" for success, is disgusted with working the "toilets" (second-rate clubs) and determines to take a crack at the big-time. Booked into the London Palladium, he is slated to follow "Georgia Gibbs," a performer who knows exactly what the public wants and "puts them away" every time. His vulgar, corny gags fail to get a laugh and he "dies." Desperate to succeed, he begs for another chance, but is swamped in the wake of the singer, who caps her cunningly contrived performance with a lachrymose tribute to "the boys who died over there."

The little comic lacks the wit to change even a single line of his mechanical act, and again he is about to "die" when, confronting disaster, he blindly ad libs a line: "Hey folks, How 'bout this one—screw the Irish!" This puerile bid for attention instantly transforms the somnolent audience into a raging mob who sweep the comic off the stage and wreck the theater.

Clearly, show business for Bruce stands for American society itself—and, indeed, in no other country have entertainers come to be more profoundly symbolic of national values than here. The anxiety to please which takes the form of tear-jerking sentimentality and fake humanitarianism in "Georgia Gibbs" is no less ruthlessly dramatized

in the portrait of the brash little comedian, whom we can take as a comic degradation of Bruce himself, and whose story is a reflection of Bruce's own development. Not only does he expose the agonies that assault the performer whose very life depends on his success with the audience; he also satirizes one of the most remarkable features of his own present role as *shaman*—the direct, brutal onslaught on the passions and prejudices of his audience that stems from desperation in the face of failure and that sets off an appalling explosion of primitive hatred.

WHILE he lacks the dramatic gifts of Elaine May, Sid Caesar, or Jonathan Winters—with their actors' techniques of mimicry, foreign accents, and sound effects—Bruce is nevertheless at his best in personal narratives put across with just a suggestion of the dramatic. His work, in fact, is intensely personal and provides an obvious outlet for his private rage; nevertheless, there is a part of Bruce that is utterly disinterested. Like any satirist, he knows that the only effective way to attack corruption is to expose and destroy it symbolically; that the more elaborately and vividly this destruction is imagined, the greater will be his own satisfaction, and the more profound the cathartic effect on the audience. Thus, gradually moving from a wholly conventional act through a series of increasingly wild and outspoken routines, Bruce has indeed become the *shaman*: he has taken on himself the role of exorcising the private fears and submerged fantasies of the public by articulating in comic form the rage and nihilistic savagery hidden beneath the lid of social inhibition.

In one of his recent routines Bruce orders the house lights out and then announces: "Now, you know what's going to happen? I'm going to p--- on the audience. The clapping is from those who had it before and enjoyed it." This promise of outrage is not kept, but is followed rather by Bruce's version of how the audience had reacted. "What did he say?" Bruce asks, taking the part of a male patron, "Did he say he's gonna 'S' on us?" Now he mimics a woman's voice: "Oh, shut up, Harry! He does it real cute."

This routine vividly illustrates Bruce's attitude toward his audience; he regards it as an object of sadistic lust, he hates and loves it; it is the enticing enemy, and he attacks it repeatedly. In the past his aggression was masked, but now it is naked. He may pick up a chair and menace a patron; if the audience laughs, he will observe soberly that he might have killed the man and

that if he had, everyone would have accepted the murder as part of the act. Here he demonstrates, almost in the manner of a classroom exercise, the repressed violence of modern society. By making the audience *laugh* at incipient murder, he has tricked them into exposing their own savage instincts. The implication is that given the slightest excuse for condoning a killing, even the absurd rationale of its being part of a nightclub act, society would join eagerly in the violence it so conscientiously deplors.

This public display of the ugly, the twisted, the perverse—offensive though it is at times—nevertheless serves a vital function, for it gives the audience a profound sense, not only of release, but of self-acceptance. Again and again, Bruce violates social taboos—and he does not die! Like the witch doctor or the analyst, he brings the unconscious to light, and thereby lightens the burden of shame and guilt. By its very nature his material cannot come out clear, decorous, and beautifully detached; it must be, and is, charged with self-pity, self-hatred, fear, horror, crudity, grotesquerie.

What is unsatisfactory in Bruce's work is his frequent failure to transmute his rage into real comedy. Sometimes he has nothing more to offer than an attitude ("Everything is rotten. Mother is rotten. The flag is rotten. God is rotten."). At other times, what starts with a promise of rounded development will flatten out into a direct and insulting statement. A sophisticated listener forgives the comic these lapses, understanding that the ad lib approach and the often intractable material are apt to betray the performer into mere obscenity; but people with no natural sympathy for this approach are shocked and offended—there has never been a lack of people in the audience to walk out during Bruce's act.

The reason for these occasional lapses into crudity is the almost total lack of "art" in Bruce's present act; he deliberately destroys the aesthetic distance which is a convention of the theater, established by tacit agreement between audience and performer that what is happening on the stage is an illusion of life, rather than life itself. Like other performers who deal in direct communication, Bruce has always tried to *reduce* the barrier between the stage and reality. He has never wanted to appear as an entertainer doing an act, but rather as himself, no different onstage from off, not really a performer, but a man who performs in order to share with others his most secret thoughts and imaginings. The desire, however, to eradicate the distinction between art and reality has at this stage almost completely

destroyed the artistry with which Bruce formerly presented his material. Gone, now, are the metaphors of the shingle man and the show business manipulator; gone, too, are the story-telling devices of the personal narrative and the dramatic impersonations. All that remains are sketchy, often underdeveloped, sometimes incoherent, scraps of former routines.

THE new material consists of deep, psychologically primitive fantasies, hurled at a defenseless audience without the mitigating intervention of art. Frequently, Bruce assaults his listeners with scatological outbursts consisting of the crudest and most obvious anal and oral sadistic fantasies, undisguised. There is currently a comic picture book in circulation (*Stamp Help Out*) with a photograph of Bruce on the cover, stripped to the waist like a heroic frontiersman, engaged in shattering a toilet bowl with an axe—Bruce's comment on the surgically white "powder room" of our culture.

Much of his current material is in fact unquotable—not so much because of the language but because its comic effect depends on non-verbal associations and is thereby scarcely intelligible in the reading. In one bit, for instance, he tells how, when the Avon representative called at his house, he drugged her, stripped her, decked her out with galoshes and moustache, raped her, and then wrote on her belly, "You were balled."

In another long and complicated routine, which changes from one performance to another, he explains that the Lone Ranger's bullets are really pellets of Ehrlich's 606 ("That's why he keeps his mouth tightly shut") and that the Lone Ranger is a homosexual ("Bring Tonto here. I wish to commit an unnatural act. Wait a minute! Bring the horse too!"). (This deliberate perpetration of outrage on the persons of the most innocuous figures of American folklore—the Lone Ranger, the Avon representative—is, of course, one of the leitmotifs of the recent "sick" humor. The same thing was once done in a grimmer way in those pornographic comic books that showed the heroes of the comic strip—familiar to every American child—in complicated sexual situations.)

As his material has become more direct, Bruce

has tended more and more to *be* the act. Because the imaginative impulse is naked, unsublimated, Bruce's intention is less and less communicated by what he says, and depends now, to a great extent, on affective devices—his manner, his tone, especially his physical appearance. Whereas in the past Bruce would walk briskly out on the floor, good-looking, impeccably groomed, wearing a chic Italian suit, now he comes on stiff-legged and stooped, wearing shabby clothes, his face a pale mask of dissipation. Having discarded the civilized mask that people wear in public to protect themselves, Bruce comes before his audience as a mythic figure—beat, accused junkie, "underground" man—who has suffered in acting-out their own forbidden desires. Where they are cautious, he is self-destructive, alternately terrifying the audience (the very fact that *he doesn't care* is awesome) and arousing their sympathy and concern. (He now regularly opens his act by enacting and commenting on his recent arrests.) Merely looking at Bruce these days is a disturbing experience.

Finally, Bruce is dramatizing his role as *shaman* by embellishing his act for the first time with consciously contrived bits of hocus-pocus. He turns the lights on and off, strikes drums and cymbals, swings into crude chants. He prowls about the stage, sometimes exposing himself to the audience, at other times crouching in the darkness and hiding from it. He opens and closes doors and climbs onto furniture to symbolize his power over the bewildered spectators.

In the darkened, cave-like club, charged with tension, the audience sits hunched over, tense, breathless, their eyes fastened on the weird figure in the center of the magic circle. While the tribe looks on with fearful absorption, the medicine man puts himself into a trance in preparation for the terrible struggle with the tribal demons (anxieties). And then—when the performance is over and the "unspeakable" has been shouted forth—there is mingled with the thunderous applause a sigh of release. Purged of their demons by the *shaman*, the tribe has been freed, for the moment, to "hunt the prey and in general fight reality."

"The New Yorker" & Hannah Arendt

IRVING HOWE

SOME MONTHS AGO, shortly after James Baldwin published in the *New Yorker* his now famous article about the Negroes, there appeared a mildly satiric comment upon it in the *New Republic*. The author of this comment elaborated upon the incongruity between Baldwin's passionate outcry and the sumptuous advertisements surrounding it. At the time I found this mildly irritating, for it seemed very much the sort of thing that highbrows—include me, too—might say without reflection, a kind of pat and automatic criticism based on a pat and automatic opposition to mass culture. After all, Baldwin had reached far more people than if his article had appeared in some little magazine; he had been paid far better than any of these magazines could possibly pay him; and the *New Yorker*, I was convinced, had not tried to censor his views. Why then complain? Wasn't it another instance of highbrow sour grapes? What if Baldwin's *cri de coeur* was flanked by ads for sleek minks and noiseless racing cars? Intellectual intransigence, I lectured myself, can too easily decline into mere snobism and self-righteousness.

Etc.

Then, a few months later, when Hannah Arendt published in the *New Yorker* her equally famous articles about the Eichmann case, I found myself troubled once more, and this time with far greater urgency than after the Baldwin article. But I could not locate the source of my trouble: was it merely the reflex of a highbrow at seeing the *New Yorker* venture upon one of its regular expeditions into The Serious? Or could it be a not very admirable envy at seeing a respected intellectual break into the prosperity and publicity the *New Yorker* brought with it?

Miss Arendt's articles roused in me such strong sentiments of disagreement that for the moment I put aside the problem of their appearance in the *New Yorker*. Time went by, and most of what had to be said in criticism of her articles was said by Marie Syrkin, Lionel Abel, and Norman Podhoretz; so that, in my mind, I could turn back to the feeling

of resentment I had had upon first seeing them in the pages of the *New Yorker*.

The solution to my problem was first suggested by Marie Syrkin. How many *New Yorker* readers, she burst out in a conversation, had ever before cared to read anything of the vast literature about Jewish resistance, martyrdom, and survival during World War II? How many would ever read anything about it again? And how many—she continued—would ever know that a notable Jewish historian, Dr. Jacob Robinson, had discovered a large number of factual errors in those articles?

For the *New Yorker* does not print polemics, rebuttals, or qualifying comments. I gather that a number of communications were sent to it concerning the errors in Miss Arendt's articles, but that only one brief correction was printed. The *New Yorker* speaks out, *ex cathedra*, upon occasion: it recognizes the presence of History: and that, one gathers, is that. Hiroshima—John Hersey. Negroes—James Baldwin. Jews—Hannah Arendt. The magazine secures what it takes to be the leading authority or the most interesting writer (but alas, the two are not always the same) to work up a subject; and there it stops. Precisely why it will not print rebuttals or running exchanges I don't know; but I imagine that the answer would be something like this: "Polemics, arguments, that's the sort of thing little magazines do, it's incestuous, you know, what Abel said about Rosenberg's article as qualified by Hook—you know, it's all sort of grubby. . . ."

No doubt; often enough it is grubby. Replies and counter-replies; charges and refutations. These fill the intellectual journals, and who does not become impatient with them? Who doesn't sooner or later throw up his hands and say, "Let them bash each other's heads in. . . ."

But who stops to think what our intellectual life would be without precisely these exchanges?

Let me cite an example, which concerns an article less likely to rouse passion than that of Miss Arendt. There recently appeared in *Partisan Review* an essay by Lionel Trilling, "The Fate of Pleasure," which I take to be a full-scale attack on the modernist outlook in thought and literature. As such, it rouses in me an urge to argument and reply; and I know that

IRVING HOWE, who this fall becomes professor of English at Hunter College, is the author of a recently published book, *A World More Attractive: A View of Modern Literature and Politics* (Horizon Press).

if I were to write a reasonably competent answer to Mr. Trilling, *Partisan Review* would print it and invite Mr. Trilling to rebut. Probably I won't get down to writing this reply, since other obligations will distract me, and in any case I suspect that someone else, similarly aroused by the essay, may at the very moment be preparing to attack it. As an experienced hand, Mr. Trilling must surely expect something of the kind to happen, and I am sure he would join me in saying that this is precisely the way things should be. It is part of what we mean by a free and sustained intellectual life.

Now let's return to Hannah Arendt and the *New Yorker*. Her articles raised issues of the utmost gravity, for they contained charges against the European Jews, their institutions and leaders, which are certain to rouse the deepest emotions among those of us who—Jews who by an accident of geography—survive. These articles reached a mass audience almost certainly unequipped to judge them critically, a mass audience that would never see Lionel Abel's devastating critique or even hear that Dr. Robinson had prepared a point-by-point refutation. For the *New Yorker*, as for the whole cultural style it represents, the publication of Miss Arendt's articles disposed, in effect, of the issue: there was nothing more for it to say or allow to be said in its columns, except to defend Miss Arendt in a lugubrious editorial against those who had presumed to notice that she wrote with insufficient scholarship or humane sympathies. One suspects that, for the *New Yorker*, it would have been tiresome to keep returning to "the same old thing."

But returning to "the same old thing" is the essence of the intellectual life.

Now one can hardly blame the *New Yorker* for not opening its pages to debate on this or any other issue. It has never claimed to be a serious intellectual journal; only a few of its intellectual friends have made that claim. Nor am I concerned here with the propriety of Miss Arendt publishing her articles in its pages. I am concerned with something far more important: the social meaning, the objective consequences, of their appearance in the *New Yorker*.

Hundreds of thousands of good middle-class Americans will have learned from those articles that the Jewish leadership in Europe was cowardly, inept, and even collaborationist; that the Jewish community helped the Nazis achieve their goal of racial genocide; and that if the Jews had not "cooperated" with the Nazis, fewer than five to six million Jews would have been killed. No small matter: and you will forgive some of us if we react strongly to this charge. But the *New Yorker* will not accept in its columns the refutations of highly responsible and scholarly opponents of Miss Arendt. These, it might be remembered, are scholars who have worked their way through—as it is not clear that Miss Arendt has—the primary sources in Yiddish, Polish, and Hebrew. As far as the *New Yorker* is concerned, Miss Arendt has the first, the last, the only word. One would surmise that its editors regard Miss Arendt's articles as "literature," quite as they might regard Baldwin's article. A terrific piece, a great story: you don't argue with literature.

What we face here, then, is a difficult problem: a problem in social controls, in the nature of modern journalism and the peculiar powers it enjoys, in the new forms of mass culture that flourish in our sophisticated age.

Responses & Reactions VI

I THOUGHT this month to depart from the regular form of the column and quote no particular passages out of the *Tales of the Hasidim*. No one, I think, could read Norman Podhoretz's "My Negro Problem—And Ours" and then go through the full spectrum of letters which followed without being provoked to some new ideas, or at least some new notions, on that forever re-emerging loch monster of sociology—the real nature of a minority group. What follows is an excerpt from a new book—it was obviously stimulated by the discussion in this magazine.

MINORITY groups are the artistic nerves of a republic, and like any phenomenon which has to do with art, they are profoundly divided. They are both themselves and the mirror of their culture as it reacts upon them. They are themselves and the negative truth of themselves. No white man, for example, can hate the Negro race with the same passionate hatred and detailed detestation that each Negro feels for himself and for his people; no anti-Semite can begin to comprehend the malicious analysis of his soul which every Jew indulges every day.

For decades the Jews have been militant for their rights; since the Second War the Negroes have emerged as an embattled and disciplined minority. It is thus characteristic that they both have a more intense awareness of their own value and their own lack of value than the awareness of the white Anglo-Saxon Protestant for himself. Unlike the Protestant of the center, minorities have a nature which is polarized. So it is natural that their buried themes, precisely those preoccupations which are never mentioned by minority action groups like the Anti-Defamation League or the NAACP, are charged with paradox, with a search for psychic extremes. To a Protestant, secure in the middle of American life, God and the Devil, magic, death and eternity, are matters outside him-

self. He may contemplate them but he does not habitually absorb them into the living tissue of his brain. Whereas the exceptional member of any minority group feels as if he possesses God and the Devil within himself, that the taste of his own death is already in his cells, that his purchase on eternity rises and falls with the calm or cowardice of his actions. It is a life exposed to the raw living nerve of anxiety, and rare is the average Jew or Negro who can bear it for long—so the larger tendency among minorities is to manufacture a mediocre personality which is a dull replica of the manners of the white man in power. Nothing can be more conformist, more Square, more profoundly depressing than the Jew-in-the-suburb, or the Negro as member of the Black Bourgeoisie. It is the price they pay for the fact that not all self-hatred is invalid—the critical faculty turned upon oneself can serve to create a personality which is exceptional, which mirrors the particular arts and graces of the white gentry, but this is possible only if one can live with one's existential nerve exposed. Man's personality rises to a level of higher and more delicate habits only if he is willing to engage a sequence of painful victories and cruel defeats in his expedition through the locks and ambushes of social life. One does not copy the manner of someone superior; rather one works an art upon it which makes it suitable for oneself. Direct imitation of a superior manner merely produces a synthetic manner. The collective expression of this in a minority group is nothing other than assimilation.

To the degree each American Jew and American Negro is assimilated he is colorless, a part of a collective nausea which is encysted into the future. The problem in a democracy is not to assimilate minorities but to avoid stifling them as they attain their equality. If the Jews and Negroes achieve a brilliant equality with the white Anglo-Saxon Protestant and the Irish Catholic, then America will be different. Whatever it will become, it will be different from anything we can conceive. Whereas if the Negro and Jew are assimilated into the muted unimaginative level of present-day American life, then America will be very

NORMAN MAILER's new book, *The Presidential Papers*, will be published shortly by Putnam.

much like it is now, only worse. The problem is similar to the difficulty in dealing with juvenile delinquents—one can pacify them by any one of a number of unimaginative programs and be left with a human material which is apathetic if indeed not anchored to moronic expectations; or one can search for arts which transmute violence into heroic activity. An inflammation or rent in the body can heal in such a way that the limb or organ offers new powers of coordination which did not exist before; equally the inflammation can subside to a chronic leaden dullness of function.

So with minorities, one must look for more than the insurance of their rights—one must search to liberate the art which is trapped in the thousand acts of perception which embody their self-hatred, for self-hatred ignored must corrode the roots of one's past and leave one marooned in an alien culture. The liberal premise—that Negroes and Jews are like everybody else once they are given the same rights—can only obscure the complexity, the intensity, and the psychotic brilliance of a minority's inner life.

But the argument of existential politics might be that one never understands a people or a time by contemplating a common denominator, for the average man in a minority group is no longer a member of that minority—he is instead a social paste which has been compounded out of the grinding stone of the society which contains him. He is not his own authentic expression. By this

logic, the average Negro or Jew is not so much a black man or a Semite as a mediocre ersatz Protestant. That does not mean he is altogether an inferior man of the center—in his suppressed nerve, in his buried heart, exist the themes which the exceptional man of the minority can embody. So a responsible politician, a President, let us say, professionally sensitive to minority groups, cannot begin to be of real stature to that minority until he becomes aware of what is most extraordinary in a people as well as what is most pressing and ubiquitous in their need. The Jews have staggered along for centuries wondering to their primitive horror whether they have betrayed God once in the desert or again twice with Christ: so they are obsessed in their unconscious nightmare with whether they belong to a God of righteousness or a Devil of treachery—their flight from this confrontation has rushed to produce a large part of that mechanistic jargon which now rules American life in philosophy, psychoanalysis, social action, productive process, and the arts themselves. The Negro, secretly fixed upon magic—that elixir of nature which seems to mediate between God and Devil—has never made his peace with Christianity, or mankind. The Negro in the most protected recesses of his soul still does not know if he is a part of mankind, or a special embodiment of nature suspended between society and the gods. As the Negro enters civilization, Faust may be his archetype, even as the Jew has fled Iago as the despised image of himself.

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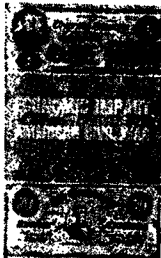
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MODERN WAR

THE BOMBING OF GERMANY. By HANS RUMPF. Translated from the German by EDWARD FITZGERALD. *Holt, Rinehart & Winston*. 256 pp. \$4.50.

Reviewed by MARCUS CUNLIFFE

A BOTHERSOME book: I have scribbled all over its margins. Bothering in small ways, which prejudice the reader both against and in favor of its author. It is so full of minor factual errors, misprints, garbled statistics, and naïve assertions that one cannot trust Herr Rumpf's larger insights. On the other hand, he is so ingenuous that one acquits him of being disingenuous: this is no pupil of Dr. Goebbels, no sophistical ex-Nazi. Herr Rumpf's book is disturbing in more important respects. The issues he raises are painful, complex, and ambiguous. To discuss them emotionally is to refuse him a fair hearing. To categorize them dispassionately is to risk peculiar falsifications, since these categories all impinge on one another. Let us begin dispassionately.

There are two arguments, military and moral, against the waging of "total" warfare. The military argument is that total warfare does not work. In the long run, unless the combatants are markedly unequal, total war tends toward total deadlock. The impulse and the capacity to retaliate, to devise antidotes and counter-terrors, will lead to stalemate. In the short run, also, total war is usually ineffective. Wars are still won—where wars can still be said to be "won"—by orthodox methods: that is, by confronting and defeating the enemy's armed forces, and by occupying enemy territory. Resources diverted to other purposes are wasted, and may even produce a contrary

effect. Thus, the attempt to destroy civilian morale by means of indiscriminate destruction may instead stiffen resistance, in making the attacker seem as odious and implacable as propaganda alleges him to be.

The moral argument, too familiar to require more than brief restatement, is that war ought to be conducted according to certain rules and confined to actual combatants. It is permissible to kill a soldier, until he has been taken prisoner, but not a woman or child. It is wrong to engage in forms of warfare that are certain or likely to cause suffering to the unarmed and innocent.

Hans Rumpf uses both arguments in his analysis of the Anglo-American bombing of Germany in 1939–1945. The dust jacket tells us that he was once inspector general of fire prevention in Germany. References in the text and bibliography disclose that he was intimately involved in the Allied bombing offensive. He has accumulated a lot of material and ruminated about it. He has had plenty to think about. Whatever the rights and wrongs, the military and moral nuances, the fact remains that some six hundred thousand German civilians were killed in the raids, and another eight hundred thousand seriously injured—ten times as many as in the German raids on Britain. No sizable city or town escaped intact. Large portions of some of them—Hamburg, Cologne, Essen, Berlin—were obliterated. The endeavor to pound Germany into rubble, and into submission, engrossed a considerable part of the Allied war effort. Losses in men and aircraft were heavy, as many a home in the British Commonwealth or in the United States can bear witness. Was the endeavor justifiable?

On military grounds, Herr Rumpf can present a strong case that it was not. Most of the evidence for this

contention has already been assembled by British and American strategists, and he has not much to add, except to underline the woe of Germany and the surprising resilience of the civilian population. As P.M.S. Blackett, Liddell Hart, and others have pointed out, the British committed themselves early in the war to the development of a strategic air arm; and, with some differences of opinion, the Americans followed suit. The Germans led the way, as Herr Rumpf rather casually acknowledges, by demonstrating the techniques of sudden terror on Guernica, Warsaw, and Rotterdam, and then on Coventry and London. But their military emphasis was for various reasons on tactical bombing, in quite close support of their ground forces. Unlike the British with their Lancasters and Halifaxes, or the Americans with their Flying Fortresses, the Luftwaffe was never equipped with a satisfactory four-engined bomber.

"Bomber" Harris of the RAF was given a free hand at sundry times to engage in what amounted to an indiscriminate onslaught on the Reich. The immense raids on Hamburg or Berlin were directed only incidentally against industrial areas. They were intended to smash workers' homes, administrative centers, water-mains, power lines, sewers—everything that enables a city to function. The damage was colossal, the military effect minimal. With astonishing rapidity the cities were patched together again. Their inhabitants became inured to the intolerable. They worked on in the belief that surrender would entail even worse conditions, or in the hope that Germany would strike back. Despite the mounting intensity of Allied attacks—the RAF flying by night, the Fortresses by day—German war production actually increased. It went on increasing until the autumn of 1944. What then

brought about collapse, the author suggests, was mainly the advance of the Anglo-American and Russian armies, with their overwhelming superiority in manpower and armament, plus the success of the American air armadas in destroying Luftwaffe fighter squadrons through aerial combat, and in knocking out key industries through precision bombing. Clear-witted strategists already perceived that the saturation raids were a failure. Yet the doctrine of destruction for destruction's (or retribution's) sake persisted. In the final months, weeks, days, Allied bombers pounded away at the Reich, Herr Rumpf remarks, with a kind of apocalyptic fury. It was, he says, as if the sorcerer's apprentice, having pronounced the magic spell, could not then call a halt.

THE GRAVER aspects of this argument shade into problems of morality and may be left there for the moment. As for technical aspects, expert testimony is on the author's side; and in general I accept the experts' analysis. However, some qualifications ought to be noted. Herr Rumpf appears himself to be an expert in a limited and blinkered way. He seems under the impression, for example, that the RAF consisted of Bomber Command and little else: hence the inaccurate assertion (p. 36) that Britain had no tactical air force. Apart from an admiring account of the famous hedgehopping raid on the Ruhr dams, he says almost nothing about the RAF's constant minor attacks on "legitimate" targets such as docks, marshaling yards, and V-bomb installations. Indeed, the German use of indiscriminate V.1 and V.2 missiles in 1944-1945 is barely mentioned, and then (p. 122) only to muddle the order of their employment.

Nor is the military verdict on mass-bombing as clear-cut as it might look. Let us concede that the British were proved wrong in their belief that Germany might be crushed by bombing (and that they were slow to react to the growing weight of contrary evidence). This was not the view of the experts in the late 1930's, who regarded mass-bombing as an

inevitable and dire feature of a future war. No one could guess how city populations would react, or what the breaking point might be. Herr Rumpf admits this uncertainty when he refers to the panic of Italian workers under bombing. Who could be sure that the same thing might not happen in the Reich—where, incidentally, there were millions of presumably disaffected foreign slave-workers?

And what else could the British do, after Dunkirk and before the Second Front? With no major land operations in prospect, needing to convince themselves and their Allies—especially the hard-pressed Russians—that they were still in the fight, they turned to the only mode of warfare open to them: war in the air. Militarily, the decision was as obvious as was the decision of the Germans, lacking a large orthodox navy, to try and starve Britain out by unrestricted submarine warfare. Even if no bigger results were achieved, at least the bombers would oblige the Germans to commit aircraft, men, and other resources that they could have used elsewhere. If this was a brutal and despairing strategy, the times themselves were brutal, and desperate.

Now the argument becomes more darkly difficult. Crime does not pay, Herr Rumpf implies. One should not bomb the innocent because that is bad strategy *and* bad morality: the connection seems inseparable in his reasoning. But if all war is evil, as I believed in my pacifist days before 1940, is one kind of crime different in kind from another, or merely in degree? "Who *are* the innocent?" I began to ask in 1940. And what if crime *does* pay? What if the Hamburgers and Berliners *had* lost their nerve as well as their homes in 1943, and mutinied against a Hitler who never even paid them the compliment of touring the devastated areas? Or what if the A-bomb had been ready a couple of years earlier? Would it not have had a most decisive effect upon both Japan and Germany?

Perhaps my sensibility was permanently impaired by the experience of being a soldier in the 1939-1945

war. In those years I witnessed a great deal of destruction, and hated it. But moral distinctions became less and less clear to me. I could not and still cannot see why civilians should not, in the nature of the abomination, suffer equally with soldiers. I do not think the carnage on the Western Front in 1914-1918 was morally or in other ways preferable to the more widely diffused slaughter of World War II. I am suspicious of the popular current distinction between nice old-fashioned limited wars and the nasty unlimited conflicts of our day. I see only a difference in degree. "Beauty and booty"—rape and plunder—are ancient concomitants of warfare. How many civilizations before our own have not perished in flames? There is a plaintive undercurrent in Herr Rumpf's well-meaning pages which one also detects among certain generals and admirals of our day. He, like them, is a specialist in, a man at home with, particular patterns of destructive activity. Then things get out of hand. The rules they have learned, the methods they have mastered, become ludicrously inadequate. It is then that they discover ethics, not before. Or they dwell nostalgically upon the good old times when the rules and methods worked, and were confined to the proper people. (They have a special fondness for the "chivalrous" battles of North Africa, fought between soldiers in an ideally abstracted military terrain, as bare of civilian irrelevances as an illustration in a training manual.)

Herr Rumpf is understandably glum, and perplexed, when he turns to the hazards of future, thermonuclear war. The hot winds of bygone firestorms have already blown his notes away. He can do little but offer marginal rebukes to architects for rebuilding bombed cities on conventional lines; or, fixated on his own war, maintain that World War III would really be the same thing, only more so; or hint obliquely that when the scores are added up, the Anglo-Americans were as ruthless as their adversaries. My own reactions are as confused as his. We *were* ruthless, and I think stupidly ruthless.

We borrowed and improved on an idiom of violence. In admitting this, we need not wallow in guilt but should instead consider what all of us as belligerents have bequeathed to the world. Despite its incoherence, this book has useful lessons for mankind. They are not new, for little new remains to be said; but nor are texts for sermons new. One lesson is that war is hell, and has always been so. World War II extended the dimensions of nightmare. That might be taken as a pessimistic lesson; it means that even a war which stops short of nuclear missiles would be nightmarish enough. Sophistication in large-scale murder had come a long way by 1945. Nuclear disarmament would not in itself produce an idyllic situation. The optimistic lesson rests on the assumption that the sorcerer's apprentice was given a second chance, and was able to profit from his previous folly. Herr Rumpf considers why gas was not employed in World War II. He concludes, rightly one supposes, that the belligerents feared it would be as unpredictably dangerous as Hannibal's elephants: the terror would be mutual. This is our hope: that universal dread may operate more realistically and more effectively than conferences of international lawyers or moralists seeking to draw up rules of military metaphysics which will specify which kinds of slaughter are O.K. and which are to be reprobated after the event.

EMBATTLED CRITICISM

METATHEATRE. By LIONEL ABEL. *Hill and Wang*. 146 pp. \$3.95.

Reviewed by RICHARD GILMAN

"I HAVE TRIED in this book," Lionel Abel writes, "to do two things: one, to explain why tragedy is so difficult, if not altogether impossible for the modern dramatist, and two, to suggest the nature of a comparably philosophic form of drama." One is impressed even before the attempt gets under way. To write on drama in America is to review, which means

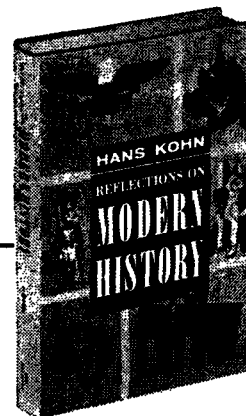
that in all but the exceptional case you have to have a reviewer's mind and soul and therefore an almost total incomprehension of such questions as Abel poses. Or else it is to produce texts and histories and academic articles, which means that you are much more likely to find yourself talking about masks, or Shakespeare's comic characters, or social ambiguity in Arthur Miller. As for the few open, unclassifiable, and engaged critics we have, the continuing and consuming job is to preserve the very notion of drama as an art, against the thinness of the native evidence and the hostility to thought which our theater, even more than our other cultural institutions, exhibits like a badge of identity.

Elsewhere—in France, for example—such inquiries as Abel's are much more common; even the stints of daily reviewing are sometimes made the minor occasions for them. Where you don't have to spend your time and vigor establishing that drama is an art, you can talk about what kind of art it is and about its dilemmas; and where the distinction between art and commerce is clearer, there is a great deal less confusion about the area and function of criticism. The critic discusses art, and some other kind of authority discusses business. Here, though, we are painfully held down to the elementary considerations: what to do about Broadway, popularity vs. the imagination, can thought be dramatic, how to write or not write a play.

The result is that writing on the drama which changes our ideas, sharpens our responses, or expands our consciousness is extraordinarily rare in this country, much rarer than such criticism is in poetry or fiction. Isolated and intermittent books that combine scholarship, force, a sense of the past, and contemporary insight, such as Eric Bentley's *The Playwright as Thinker* or Francis Fergusson's *The Idea of a Theatre*, instruct us and keep the possibilities open, but at the same time they remind us that we have almost no place to put them.

This loneliness of vision and idea affects the works themselves, and accounts, at least in part, for certain qualities and attitudes of Abel's

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book: its aggressiveness, which is that of the prophet without honor in his own country; its self-assurance—amounting at times to cocksureness—which is that of the mind protecting itself against homelessness and cultural insecurity; and its dogmatism, which is often the ricochet from an opposing dogmatism, that of inherited beliefs and organized refusal to encounter change and to mobilize the mind to encompass it.

"I do not ask to be listened to, even if wrong," Abel tells us at the outset, "on the ground that my way of being wrong is interesting or idiosyncratic. I claim to be right." Among the areas where the claim is staked out is the problem of *Hamlet*, settled in this book "once and for all"; the exact approach to Beckett and to Brecht ("No, I do not think this is the point of *Galileo* at all, even if Brecht thought it was."); the precise and unvarying constituents of tragedy; and the nature of the entire complex change that has come over Western drama since Racine—elucidated in a formula. Abel's intransigent and grandiose independence also carries over into his style. At times his prose is marvelously supple and accurate. Owing nothing to academic totems, New York cult, or the circus of the ego, his best critical writing is informed by an urgent sense of the primacy of tight logical structures for containing aesthetic phenomena, and animated by a rare concreteness of response. But at least as frequently his writing is bewilderingly elliptical and compressed, tangential and foreshortened, full of premises without conclusions and conclusions without origins, and marked by assertions of meaning whose cogency is undermined by Abel's refusal to set down an approach to meaning, to trace the passage between ideas.

Why are time and its effects so important to Beckett? Because, I suspect, of his nostalgia for eternity. Should we not be, at the very least, the playthings of eternity and not merely the playthings of time? Such is the question Beckett poses in his plays, thus suggesting that the actual characters are them-

selves the scenes of an invisible action: the action of time, which might be eternal itself, or the surrogate, although we cannot be sure of this, for eternity?

Metatheatre, then, is a battle between author and reader, and Abel's stature requires that his reader be as militant, or at least as strategy-minded, as he is. There is, one doesn't hesitate to say to Abel, no absolute truth in matters of criticism, the encounter is everything, and a mind that is interestingly wrong is surely to be preferred to one that is dully right. In the face of Abel's central claim to be right and his unwillingness to be thought of as interesting, I think him mostly wrong, but more valuable than if he were frugally right.

ABEL'S ARGUMENT that tragedy disappeared from the theater after Racine is something that only all those who think *Death of a Salesman* a tragedy would want to dispute. No plays of the past three hundred years have qualified as true tragedies by the standards that have been maintained and that derive from Greek, Elizabethan, and French classical examples. Still, Abel's approach is much more radical than other recent ones, for he restricts the definition of tragedy so that it leaves room for far fewer plays than even the most exacting criticism has allowed in up to now. In this new and narrow dispensation, Shakespeare is permitted to have written only one tragedy—*Macbeth*—Racine one or two, Corneille, Marlowe, and the other Elizabethans none at all.

There is nothing unconsidered (although there is something inevitably peevish) about Abel's exclusion of so many plays which have always been taken for tragedies—of *King Lear*, for example, about which Frank Kermode has recently said that "for everybody, [it] is the greatest and most inclusive of tragedies." Nothing can be a tragedy for Abel unless it meets his strict conditions. "Sophocles, in *King Oedipus at Colonus*," he writes, "set forth the two essential movements of tragedy: in the first play about Oedipus, the protagonist is destroyed; in the second play, hav-

ing lived through tragic destruction, he becomes divine, a daemon."

The definition is of course consistent with the events of *King Oedipus* and with those of several other plays Abel discusses, and in his hands it becomes an effective instrument of analysis and revelation as long as he is attending to just those works. But when he carries it over to other plays a resistance immediately springs up which his arguments are never able to overcome. It becomes clear that he has committed in a new form the classic error of making one kind of tragedy the norm or pattern for all others, of imposing a unity within which the objects he is handling will not rest obediently.

His insistence that tragedy can only unfold as the destruction of a protagonist who is then raised to power through suffering simply ignores all those plays in which such a process cannot be traced—the *Hippolytus*, *Hecuba*, and the *Bacchae* are examples. And his assertion that it cannot be written without the possession of a set of "implacable values" similarly brushes aside those plays in which implacable values do not lie behind the events, but rather developing values, as in the *Oresteia*, or turbulent or disintegrating ones, as in much of Euripides or Shakespeare.

Beyond this, one wishes to say that it is not values which distinguish tragedy from other forms of drama so much as actions, or rather action itself, which is precisely what is implacable—fateful, complete, irreversible, and felt to be at the center of existence. And it is the impossibility of our feeling action to have this character, of possessing the sense of existence as at the same time necessary and disastrous, that has made tragedy itself impossible, since the breakup of those coherent worlds where it was the most implacable vision of implacability and the gravest form to contain fatality.

But though Abel's formal description of tragedy is too limited, too formalistic and idiosyncratic, the fact that he has produced one, that he has made it so uncompromising and backed it with such vehemence, is a valuable accession to us. And this is

because there is no area of drama criticism which is more ambiguous than the consideration of tragedy, even in regard to the generally accepted plays, none that allows more sentimentality, slackness of vision, and imprecision of ideas to flourish. Abel is one of the rare critics who sees tragedy as stringent, rooted in history, and entirely anti-romantic; it is the romanticism of so much of our thinking about the form, our wish to see it as something ennobling and therefore a justification for all our lesser activities, instead of as a stern mode of awareness, that has plagued us for so long and permitted the canonization of inadequate creations.

There is more than the meaning of tragedy at stake. There is also the fact that drama criticism has lagged behind drama, that we have not yet elaborated an understanding of the ways in which the theater, at least the theater that has maintained itself as an art, has filled the metaphysical and aesthetic gap left by the disappearance of tragedy. And this is the area of Abel's second thesis, which rises directly out of the first. In his essay on *Hamlet*, a piece whose suggestiveness and originality are just able to redeem it from a debonair dismissal of *all* previous interpretations and a consistent misreading of whatever holds out against the theory, Abel sets about building his bridge between the end of one kind of form and sensibility and the beginning of another.

IF THE bridge is too narrow and if Abel commits the same reductive and high-handed acts on the near side as on the far, it is nevertheless one of the few serious attempts we have had to uncover the nature of the change. Abel sees Hamlet as the first self-conscious character in drama. And though this emphasis results in a failure to see the play whole, it also enables him to throw light on its central problem. If Hamlet is self-conscious, Abel says, it is because Shakespeare was self-conscious, he wished to write a tragedy in an age when tragedy was becoming impossible, and his protagonist, uncomfortable in this kind of play, was forced to "write"

his own, to dramatize himself. The result was a "metaplay," the first in drama.

I think that Shakespeare did write a tragedy, one within which the new fact of self-consciousness had to be incorporated, but in any case, Abel's ideas about the character of Hamlet and the existence of a new element in drama become the basis of his theory of metatheatre. The new drama is characterized, Abel says, by two principles: one, that the world is a stage, and two, that life is a dream. That is to say, the philosophic drama that evolved after tragedy is the product of the modern self-conscious playwright's inability to accept the world as real. Metatheatre, unlike tragedy, dramatizes not the world but the consciousness, of which the world is felt to be a projection. It is the form most suited to an age from which implacable values have vanished, experience has become cut off from cosmologies, and the self has been left at the center of its own dream.

"I have asked myself," Abel writes, "can I be the first one to think of designating a form which has been in existence for so long a time . . .?" Yes, he is the first, to designate it at any rate, but what he has named does not rest quietly under its new title. The fact is that, like Abel's notions of tragedy, the idea of metatheatre is extremely useful when it is employed to examine those plays it happens to fit, and is either irrelevant or obfuscatory everywhere else.

It is especially helpful when applied to Pirandello and Genet, two dramatists whose theater is "about" theater as much as it is about life and who have used theatrical illusion to examine the nature of illusion itself and locate it in relation to events. It is worse than useless in regard to playwrights like Shaw and Ibsen, both of whom Abel has in fact to derogate because their plays will not lend themselves to his theories. (How reductive Abel can be is demonstrated by his remarks on *Ghosts*, whose "real subject" is not "the rigidity of Norwegian middle-class society," but rather the fatal rigidity of ideals in a world of fact.) And though his concept of metatheatre enables him to

cut through a great deal of cant about Brecht and Beckett, it also threatens to turn his discussions of them into cranky bits of special pleading.

His reading of Brecht rests on the notion that Brecht was not interested in moral truth but in proclaiming and defending basic physical existence, the human body "in its assertiveness, natural ecstasy and desire to endure." This is an original idea and a valuable approach to Brecht, but it is not the only one and Abel's insistence that it is makes his reading more difficult to accept than it need have been. When he turns to Beckett his absolutism is still more damaging. Urging his interpretation, to the exclusion of any other, that *Endgame* and *Waiting for Godot* are "directly and un-deviatingly about Joyce and Beckett's relation to him," Abel comes close to being merely perverse.

But then Abel is forever running this risk. That he always eventually escapes it is testimony to the boldness and intensity of his ideas, whatever their waywardness, and still more to his powerful responsiveness to drama before the logical and categorical processes get into motion. Even in his most outlandish essays, those on *King Lear* or Beckett, for instance, this openness to aesthetic experience keeps the losses from being complete. And in those pieces where the theorizing is suspended—his review of J. B. and Djuna Barnes's *The Antiphon*, where he brilliantly demolishes the pretensions of modern verse drama, or of *The Connection*, in which he exactly delineates the strange new anti-pleasure and destruction of the gods that Gelber's play announces—there is no critic of drama who can surpass him.

The point, I think, is that where you feel compelled to be on top of all aesthetic reality, to urge your views instead of your taste, and to be right because so much is flagrantly and complacently wrong, you are going to suffer from the deprivation of room, patience, humility, and tentativeness that criticism requires. The problem of tragedy is not to be settled in a formula, nor is the nature of the metaphysical change that has come over recent drama to be accounted

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for by simply taking the prefix off "metaphysical" and attaching it to the arena of the change. "The greatest failure of insight," La Rochefoucauld wrote, "is not falling short of the goal, but passing it." In his brilliant, bellicose, capricious, and unrelenting attempt to make a place for his insight in American thinking about the drama, Abel has certainly gone far past the goal. It remains to say, of course, that we are better off than if he had not addressed himself to any goal at all, or to a trivial one. But the damage is there.

MODELED CHILDREN

BASIC READERS "FIFTIES" EDITION AND NEW BASIC READERS "SIXTIES" EDITION, (including Think-and-Do Books and Teacher's Editions). By WILLIAM S. GRAY, MARION MONROE, A. STERL ARTLEY, MAY HILL ARBUTHNOT, HELEN M. ROBINSON, and LILLIAN GRAY. *Scott, Foresman and Company. Various priced.*

Reviewed by TUNG ORANS

MESSRS. Gray, Artley, *et. al.*, are the authors of the Think-and-Do Books, a series of workbooks designed to teach children how to read. Their publishers, Scott, Foresman & Company, estimate that four-and-one-half to five million children from grades one to three are using them. They have been used extensively all over the country since their introduction in the early 1940's; to keep up with demand several printings are issued each year, usually in quantities of 100,000.

I first became acquainted with a Think-and-Do book when my daughter brought one home from kindergarten. The format was familiar—a full-sized, paperbound book of multiple-choice problems. One exercise in particular attracted my attention. Under a picture of a little girl squatting before two chickens tugging at either end of a worm, was the question: "Is this funny?" My daughter had put her check in the "no" box and the problem had been marked

wrong. When I questioned her about it, she answered, "That's the way chickens are. What's funny?"

I looked again at the picture, but it remained a humorless drawing in the tradition of standard textbook illustrations. On the inside border of the page, I was able to find the rationale for the exercise: "Lead the children to see that we laugh when things seem funny to us."

Closer scrutiny revealed that the girl in the picture was laughing. (It isn't always easy to tell.) We laugh when things seem funny to us; the girl in the picture is laughing; therefore it is funny. I pointed out my discovery.

The reply was, "That's Sally. She's only three." She herself was five, and her reasoning was indisputable.

Sally and the chickens turn out to be only one of many drills running through the series from pre-reading to third grade that instruct children in the matter of laughter. Preceding each one are drawings that illustrate the fact that a man sleeping is not funny while a man falling is, that a dog running is not funny, but a dog holding a teddy bear in its mouth is, and so on. Following Sally and the chickens come similar exercises at a higher level of reading skill. In one story various people are brought in to make a dour princess laugh. "One man appeared with a toy clown and a toy horse. The toys were hanging by strings from sticks. By pulling first one string and then another, the man made the toys do clever tricks. He made the horse gallop, and then he made the clown hang by its heels from the horse's back." If the pupil should fail to find this funny, he is perhaps in need of remedial work in "interpretative skills."

The back of each Think-and-Do book bears an Index of Skills which divides the exercises into two categories: "interpretative skills" and "word-perception skills." The latter deals with such familiar things as phonetics and vocabulary. Under "interpretative skills," however, one finds "forming sensory images," "perceiving relationships," "strengthening memory," "recognizing emotional reactions," and so on.

The Teacher's Guidebook to the series adopts the view that modern education must take the pupil's entire personality into consideration; accordingly the authors have set out to train the total child: mind, emotion, memory, senses, sexual identity, etc.

Under "forming sensory images," the pupil is told that dimes do not have a taste, that tree bark is never smooth. Under "strengthening memory based on association," he is marked wrong if he associates birthday with rabbits; party, cake, presents, but not rabbits are to be remembered with birthday. Under "drawing inferences from pictures," he is corrected if he prefers a sad-looking doll to a smiling one or an old-fashioned car to a late model. Under "perceiving relationships," he is to distinguish men's work from women's: mowing the lawn from dish-washing.

Furthermore, to develop his ability to "make inferences based on logical sequence," he is given the beginnings and ends of stories and asked to supply the middles. (One is reminded of similar exercises used in recent studies on creativity; here, however, the measuring rod is reversed.) In the world of this book, there is only one correct middle—the most obvious route between the beginning and the end. If at first something is dry and later wet, what other reason than that it must have rained?

The assumption seems to be that for every situation there exists only one proper response, be it emotional, perceptual, or intellectual. The latest Teacher's Editions of the workbooks bear some evidence of retreat from this rather extraordinary position; certain cautionary notes have been inserted beneath several of the more touchy exercises. After the correct answers have been underlined, this sentence occurs, "Any response that the pupil can justify is acceptable." Though such instruction grants to teachers the power to decide appeals, they do nothing to the fundamental proposition instilled in the pupil that there *are* emotions which are correct and others which are not.

In yet another note, the teacher is warned, "Since humor is a subjective

matter, pupils' reactions will vary. Each child's answers should be respected." Again, the statement comes after the correct answers have been given, making two interesting categories: correct answers and allowable answers. But are subjective matters, matters for instruction?

WHAT IS fun and what is desired would seem to be two more subjective matters. Quite as remarkable as the attempt to teach children what is fun and what they want, however, are the author's definitions of the two notions themselves. Sally is shown pushing a toy buggy in which a cat is sitting. Who is having fun? Sally. Not having fun? Cat. Sally sprinkles water on Dick. Fun? Sally. Not fun? Dick. The active one has fun, the passive one does not, and by their pairing it would seem that "fun" is to be associated with someone else's "not fun."

In a drill on desire two lists are given: Dick, Jane, Sally, and Mother in one; opposite it are pictures of various articles—baseball and bat, lady's hat, high heels, teddy bear, etc.

Between the two lists stands the word "wants." The pupil is to trace lines from the person to the article the person "wants." While generally one wants that which one doesn't already have, not so with Dick, Jane, Sally, and Mother. Dick "wants" the ball and bat, Mother "wants" her hat and her high heels, Sally "wants" her teddy bear. In the Think-and-Do world of the authors, Sally does not "want" her mother's high heels; like Dick, she pares down her wants to what she already has.

The model man the authors are striving to mold emerges as not very different from the drawings of him in textbooks. He is a mildly sadistic individual with limited desires. He laughs heartily and readily at whatever is labeled comedy; he thinks this year's car is more beautiful than last year's and last year's more beautiful than the one before. He has never tasted anything that is not known for its taste, and he is careful to avoid smooth barks as well as illogical sequences. Warily he treads the thin line of proper heterosexuality and ac-

cordingly avoids tasks labeled feminine such as dish-washing. Finally he marries a woman who regards the lawn mower as taboo.

Thus, in the words of the authors, millions of children will come to "enjoy the sense of belonging to Dick, Jane, and Sally's family. As they live vicariously with these book children, they share the warmth and understanding of wholesome family relationships. Gradually they integrate the book children's character traits and activities into their own life experience."

FREE THOUGHT

FREE MEN AND FREE MARKETS. By ROBERT THEOBALD. *Clarkson N. Potter*. 203 pp. \$5.00.

Reviewed by ROBERT L. HEILBRONER

FROM ITS title, one might suspect that this was a tract in defense of *laissez-faire* economics, but titles can be misleading. Robert Theobald's

LIBERATION

"What counted most at the Lincoln Memorial was not the speeches, eloquent as they were, but the pledge of a quarter million Americans, black and white, to carry the civil rights revolution into the streets. Our task now is to fulfill this pledge through nonviolent uprisings in hundreds of cities . . ."

Bayard Rustin in the
October *Liberation*

The editors of *Liberation* are Bayard Rustin, A. J. Muste, Dave Dellinger and Sidney Lens, men whose names recur time and again whenever struggles for civil rights, peace and economic justice are reported. *Liberation's* editors and contributors are leaders in many of the organizations of protest, yet *Liberation* remains independent. *Liberation* is radical, fully committed to the revolutionary challenge of non-violent direct action.

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book is very far from being a conservative treatise—which is not to say that it is a radical one. Indeed, this curious book cannot rightly be placed on the political spectrum at all. Suspended above the gravitational pull of the political world, it defies the ways of the workaday world like the Indian rope trick. In fact, the book in itself is like the Indian rope trick—amusing, even clever, but fundamentally a hoax. It is not to be taken seriously.

This is not to say that we should not take seriously the problems that Theobald is interested in. He sees a world coming (in fact he sees it already here) in which the traditional mechanisms of economics will no longer serve their purpose. A wave of cybernation is soon to render a large proportion of society's labor effort redundant. At the same time, mounting surpluses of basic commodities, such as food and steel, make the redundancy of labor irrelevant. Coupled with this we have only the meanest pittance placed at the disposal of the economic outcasts by a government still chained by a nostalgia for 19th-century economics. The result is an increasing dysfunction: unemployment, inadequate purchasing power, recourse to irrationalities in order to sustain a semblance of economic "growth."

Given some license for exaggeration—I do not, for example, believe that cybernation and "abundance" are quite in the advanced stages Theobald says they are—I think this is a true enough statement of the case. I confess that my teeth are set on edge by various barbarous neologisms to which the author resorts for some inscrutable purpose—firms are called "marketives" and goods and services "ecofacts"—and I am somewhat pained at the tone of discovery in which Theobald speaks of things that have been long known and explored. But that is not where my objection lies. For having diagnosed the malady of an ailing capitalism, Theobald now produces with a flourish his Magic Rejuvenation Pill—BES or Basic Economic Security:

We will need to adopt the con-

cept of an absolute constitutional right to an income. This would guarantee to every citizen of the United States, and to every person who has resided within the United States for a period of five consecutive years, the right to an income from the federal government sufficient to enable him to live with dignity. No government agency, judicial body, or other organization whatsoever should have the power to suspend or limit any payments assured by these guarantees.

To be sure, this is not quite the whole of it. Like all utopian planners, Theobald gets involved in a certain amount of fussy detail: the system will be bolstered, not only by BES but also by CS (Committed Spending); side by side with "marketives" will come a new category of productive organization, the "consentive." An Appendix gives us a rough idea of income levels, starting with \$3200 for a couple with two children and no non-BES income.

Now curiously enough, I find no point of economics to disagree with here. The productive capacity is there and could certainly be spread along more egalitarian lines, as BES would insure, while demand created in this fashion would in fact serve to sustain a steady and high flow of output. The trouble is, the design of a purely mechanical utopia is mere child's play. Anyone can sit down and figure out ways of dividing up the work and the output with results that please him more than the present sorry arrangements. But if the intellectual enterprise is to become more than the play of a child, one must go on to probe into two far more difficult areas. The first is the question of how this mechanical rearrangement of economic affairs will affect the political and social fabric of society. And the second is the question of how the desired economic mechanism is actually to be fashioned from the existing one.

THUS LET us ask ourselves—for Theobald does not ask other than in passing—what might be the effect on society if men no longer had to work in order to live? How many workers would wish to continue in the fac-

tories—even well-lit, ventilated, and automated factories—when they could get BES and go fishing? All right, says Theobald, we will pay them more. Good—and as prices thereupon rise, what happens to the buying power of BES? And in any case, what makes Mr. Theobald so sure that men would be so obedient in following the lure of higher wages? How much would we have to pay Mr. Theobald himself to entice him into a mine or onto a South Dakota farm or even into a cybernated North Carolina mill? And if the introduction of BES would fearfully complicate the problem of assuring society's output—if, in the economists' words, it would play hob with the shape and position of the supply curve of labor—what then would be left of "free markets" and "free men"?

This is one problem—or, rather, one of a set of problems—that gets only the most superficial examination in this book. But it is not the most important. There remains the little question of how we are to achieve Theobald's utopia, and here a quotation sheds sudden illumination: "This book is written in the belief that most of these individuals ['the highly respected corporate head, the energetic union leader and the concerned cabinet member'] are fundamentally more concerned with the achievement of the West's basic goals than with the preservation of their present roles, with their attached rights and obligations."

What are we to make of this pitiable naïveté? Let us leave aside for the moment the problem of just what the goals of the West are, and ask if a study of Western history allows one to contend that, before the claims of sweet reasonableness, the pocket-book, and the flag have ever been laid aside. If it were not so anguishing and so cruel, it would be comic.

I know, I know, it is good that a man speaks his mind freely, good that he dreams about a better world, good that he shrugs aside the petty details and concentrates on the main thing. No doubt this feeling accounts for the encomiums which this book has elicited from people who should

know better. For in the end this is not a useful, nor—as I said at the outset—a serious book. It is not right—in fact it is positively wrong—to play these kinds of games with the re-organization of society. It is not right to legislate in the mind the most far-reaching changes in the affairs of men and then to sweep under the rug all the consequences, unpleasant as well as pleasant, which might flow from those changes. It is not right to speak of the re-ordering of society and to ignore wealth and power, ideology and self-interest, and the vast rooted inertia of human conditions. Schemes for social change have been and should be among the most enlarging and ennobling of men's intellectual efforts. They have been and they should be ideas for which men are willing to transform their lives, even on occasion to give up their lives. Hence when I see a plan for a new society advanced, not in the somber recognizance of man's present (and for a long while, foreseeable) estate, not in the awareness (or the defiance) of the existing massive structures of privilege and power, but only as a *divertissement*, an intellectual bagatelle, a cute idea, then I feel saddened and in some ways more cast down than when I read the stupid but at least substantial defenses of the status quo.

HEBREWS & HELLENES

BEFORE THE BIBLE: THE COMMON BACKGROUND OF GREEK AND HEBREW CIVILIZATIONS. By CYRUS H. GORDON. Harper & Row. 319 pp. \$6.00.

Reviewed by H. L. GINSBERG

BIBLICAL ISRAEL, for all its originality, cannot be studied in isolation from the Semitic cultures of the Ancient Near East. Yet these are not the only cultures that shed welcome light on the Bible; there are also the civilizations of the Egyptians, the Hittites, and the Sumerians (to cite them in alphabetical order). It is not for nothing that written and iconic monuments of those peoples bulk large

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in, respectively, *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament* and *Ancient Near Eastern Pictures Relating to the Old Testament*, two quarto tomes which Bible students all over the globe are taught to regard as repositories of data of the utmost importance.

It would, however, be a mistake to regard as a closed system even the Ancient Near East as a whole, for it underwent a profound modification as a result of the Macedonian and Roman conquests. How intensive—to take one very pertinent example—was the Hellenization of Jewish Palestine between 150 B.C.E. and 400 C.E. has been demonstrated by Professor Saul Lieberman in *Greek in Jewish Palestine* and *Hellenism in Jewish Palestine* (especially the latter). During the same period, of course, the Occident underwent an even profounder influence by Palestine, in the spread first of Judaism and then of Christianity, the latter becoming in time the dominant religion of the Roman Empire. What, then, about pre-Hellenistic antiquity? Needless to say, there were no Chinese Walls then either. As is well known, the Greek and Latin alphabets were borrowed from the Phoenicians. (The capital letters in these scripts resemble the ancient Hebraeo-Phoenician characters much more closely than the modern Hebrew ones do.) This borrowing may not have taken place much before 700 B.C.E., but contacts between Syria and the region of the Aegean Sea go back much further. Much beautiful Mycenaean pottery came to light at Ugarit, a city at the northern end of the Syrian coast which was destroyed around 1200 B.C.E.; and the men who destroyed it were likewise an “import” from the Aegean world, one of those “Sea Peoples,” who, at that time, landed on the Syrian coast and proceeded down it in ox carts, eventually settling in the coastal plain of Palestine. The name *Palestine* itself is derived from that of the best known of these Sea Peoples, the *Philistines*.

In the light of all this, a scholar is not only apt but in duty bound to start speculating when he comes upon certain suggestive parallels be-

tween Homer and the Bible. What, for example, is he to make of the fact that the motif of Potiphar's wife and Joseph appears in Homer—and not once but twice? (She gets even with the handsome youth for refusing to commit adultery with her by alleging that he tried to. The earliest text in which the motif occurs is the Egyptian tale of Bitis.) So, too, the scholar must also pause when he finds Homer expressing the notion of “in the past” by means of the phrase “yesterday and the day before,” just as the Bible does.

STIMULATED BY such parallels, Professor Gordon has undertaken to describe the cultures of the Ancient Near East and the contents of the Homeric epics with a view toward uncovering the common heritage out of which they all developed. This is undoubtedly an important undertaking, but the value of Professor Gordon's book is unfortunately impaired by its lack of scholarly sobriety. What I found most suggestive in it was the observation that, whereas romantic love may safely be assumed to have occurred in every generation, Greeks and Hebrews alike feature it only in narratives about the Heroic Age, and that something similar is related in the Ugaritic Legend of King Keret. Even here, however, I should have liked it better if Gordon had indicated that, suggestive as are the common features of the Legend of King Keret and the story of the Trojan War, there are some obvious differences (a seven-day siege, apparently with no shooting and certainly with no ensuing destruction, is not the same thing as a ten-year siege with terrible casualties on both sides and the ultimate destruction of the besieged city), and if he had frankly indicated the doubts that attach to some of the parallel features which he represents as certain. And other features of the “common background” are even more disconcerting.

Gordon equates: (1) Gilgamesh's washing before he sets out on his journey home from the “Mouth of the Rivers” where he has sought out Utnapishtim, the Babylonian hero

of the Flood; (2) the Greeks' immersions in the sea before Ilios (Troy); (3) the Jewish *Tashlikh*.

But Gilgamesh's bath has nothing to do with sin or ritual. The journey to “Utnapishtim the Faraway” was so long that Gilgamesh lived for months on wild beasts and replaced his worn-out original raiment with the beasts' skins. For the return journey, therefore, Utnapishtim instructs the boatman who has brought Gilgamesh as follows (*Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament*, Speiser's translation);

*The man thou hast led (hither),
whose body is covered with
grime,
The grace of whose members skins
have distorted,
Take him, Urshanabi, and bring
him to the washing-place.
Let him wash off his grime in
water clean as snow,
Let him cast off his skins, let the
sea carry (them) away,
That the fairness of his body may
be seen.
Let him renew the band round his
head,
Let him put on a cloak to clothe
his nakedness,
That he may arrive in his city,
That he may achieve his journey.
Let not (his) cloak have a mouldy
cast,
Let it be wholly new.*

The washing of the Greeks in the sea before Ilios (Troy), on the other hand, is a ritual. But it too has nothing to do with sin. To get dirty and sweaty with hard work is no sin, but it is improper to present offerings to the gods in that condition; for the washings in the *Iliad* are revealed quite clearly by their contexts as rituals preliminary to sacrifice. The Greeks, being encamped on the beach next to their ships, naturally washed in its convenient waters. The city of Ilios, however, stood some distance back from the sea, and in all probability its inhabitants did not trouble even in normal times to go down to it whenever they wanted to present an offering to a god. It is certain that they did not do so while the beach was occupied by the Greeks: from the *Iliad* 6:266–8, we can see that they considered washing the hands ade-

quate purification for prayer and libation.

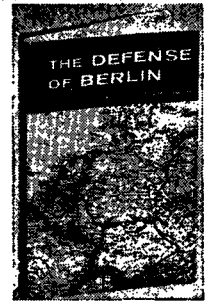
Micah 7:19, finally ("Oh, hurl into the depths of the sea all their [our] guilt"), has nothing to do with any kind of washing, either aesthetic-hygienic or ritual, and, on the other hand, alone of all the three cases we are considering, it does relate to sin. When God forgives our sins he, so to speak, consigns them to Davy Jones's locker (we should say, he burns our *IOU's*); when he does not, he guards them jealously in a sealed money bag or box (Hosea 13:12; Job 14:17; we should say, in a safe). There is, to be sure, a Jewish custom (which cannot be traced back further than the 13th century C.E., and is consequently ignored on principle by pious rabbinic scholars who look askance upon such late innovations) known as *Tashlikh*, in which (on the first day of Rosh ha-Shanah, or on the second if the first falls on a Sabbath) the above verse (among others) is recited at the edge of (not in) a body of water and accompanied by a symbolic gesture. But not another word is needed to prove that this is wholly unrelated to the ablutions of Gilgamesh or of Homer's Achaeans—and Dardanians.

THE SAME thing happens when one examines closely Gordon's assertions that the Egyptians and the Greeks are at times just as monotheistic as the Hebrews and the Hebrews at times just as polytheistic as the Egyptians and the Greeks. To begin with, in some cases where these pagans say "God" they clearly mean "a god"; in others they mean a particular god (especially if they use the article and say "the god"); and in still others they mean "the powers above," with not the slightest notion of monotheism. That is not just my opinion, but the opinion of competent Egyptologists and Hellenologists. Homer's Achilles, for example, was himself a son of the goddess Thetis, and in his last days he went about in the marvelous accoutrements that the craftsman god Hephaistos had fashioned for him. Hephaistos had done this as a favor to Thetis, to whom he was beholden for rescuing him when

his mother Hera tried to do away with him because (as a result of being flung from heaven by his father Zeus) he was a cripple. That this Achilles became a monotheist between Iliad 19:204, where he learns from a prophetic horse's mouth that Apollo has enabled Hector to slay many Achaeans, and 21:103, where he vows death to any Trojan that "God" (or "a god") may deliver into his hands, is absurd. Conversely, it is absurd to make the Bible polytheistic when it speaks of the true God as *elohim*; this word is formally a plural, but when it means *YHWH* it is almost invariably construed with singular adjectives and verbs. And it is again absurd to deny that *elohim* can also mean merely "a divine being, or celestial," when Hosea 12:4-5 (counted 12:5-6 in Christian Bibles) employs *elohim* and *mal'akh* ("messenger, angel") as synonyms.

And worse than absurd is Gordon's midrash on the Lord's "taking note of" (Hebrew: *paqad*) barren women and granting them children (Genesis 21:1; 1 Samuel 2:21). Gordon, by decreeing that *paqad* in those passages means "to visit for coitus" (he cites Judges 15:1 as proof), degrades the Bible to the level of the crude Egyptian theology, in which kings claimed that their mothers (though they had terrestrial husbands) had conceived them of gods. The fact is that the verb means simply "to remember, visit, attend to, or take notice of," regardless of the purpose. The Lord attends to (*paqad*) the Israelites in Egypt and delivers them (Genesis 50:25, Exodus 4:31); or to those in the land of Israel, and gives them food (Ruth 1:6) or restores their political fortunes (Zephaniah 2:7); or to those in the Babylonian exile, and brings them home (Jeremiah 29:10). One can equally well say *zakhar* "to remember," whether the object is a barren woman (1 Samuel 1:19) or Noah with his family and his "pets," drifting on the Flood in his ark (Genesis 8:1). The purposes for which a human being can attend to (*paqad*) fellow human beings are no less varied, from giving them a decent burial (2 Kings 9:34) to inquiring about their welfare (1

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Samuel 17:18). Only a desire to discover common backgrounds at all costs could have led to such an *Einfall* as Gordon's.

HARMLESS in comparison, but still unwarranted, are some of Gordon's new "insights" into the Patriarchs. At Ugarit there have come to light documents which speak about merchants from an Ur somewhere in the north. That the Ur from which Abram (Abraham) came (Genesis 11:28, 31; 15:7) is not the Babylonian city of that name but some northern locality, was surmised nearly a lifetime ago by Eduard Meyer and Adolphe Lods and is, for various reasons, plausible. Accordingly, Abram's Ur may be, as Gordon surmises, identical with the one from which those merchants came to Ugarit. But that is not enough for Gordon. No, the Patriarchs have to be, like the Urites who came on a mission to Ugarit, merchants—or, as he says, "merchant princes." Now, it is a fact that, both at Shechem (Genesis 34:10, 21) and in Egypt (42:34), Jacob's family is accorded the right to settle in the territory and to *sahar* it, and it is also a fact that the latter verb is commonly assumed

to mean in those passages "to engage in commerce in." But even those who have accepted this interpretation have not, up to now, concluded that the Patriarchs and their children were "merchant princes"—for the simple reason that the Genesis account keeps emphasizing their pastoral character, rounded out with a little cultivation and, in the case of Esau, hunting. If one excludes Esau's swap of his birthright for Jacob's lentil porridge, the only thing the Patriarchs or their children are ever reported to have sold is Joseph. And of course a kidnaping which was isolated, and was motivated not by greed but by spite, did not make them traders: the text is careful to stress that they were shepherds; it is only the people they sold their brother to—Ishmaelites who were taking products from Gilead down to Egypt—who were merchants. To Gordon, buying a piece of land near Schechem to pitch one's tent on, buying a burial plot near Hebron, and buying grain rations in Egypt when there are none to be gotten in Canaan, are all trading activities. But is a professor who buys groceries, or even a house, a car, or a burial plot, also a trader? Surely, nobody who wasn't out for *hiddushim*

("discoveries") would conclude from the Genesis accounts that the Patriarchal group ever bought anything for the purpose of selling it at a profit, but only that they probably sold some of the cattle they bred and possibly some of the grain they grew in good years. (What Joseph did in Egypt for Pharaoh is something else again.) As a matter of fact, Kimhi (*Book of Roots*) in the Middle Ages, and Yehoash (in his Yiddish translation of the Bible), Koehler (in his *Lexicon*), and Speiser (in articles in learned periodicals) in modern times have all noted that the verb *sahar* never means anything but "to move about freely in," and only the nouns *soher* and *sehar* mean "merchant" and "gain" respectively. I also subscribe to that view; but as I have said, even if the traditional interpretation is correct, the Book of Genesis knows nothing about the Patriarchs being merchants.

Gordon has the precious advantage of being able to read Akkadian, Hebrew, Greek, and Ugaritic (among other languages), and he has contributions of real merit to his credit. He can make more, provided he reverts to what he himself has shown to be sound method.

BOOK REVIEWERS IN THIS ISSUE

MARCUS CUNLIFFE teaches in the department of American studies of the University of Manchester in England.

RICHARD GILMAN is drama critic of *The Commonweal* and a frequent contributor to the *New Republic*.

ROBERT L. HEILBRONER is the author of *The Making of Economic Society*, *The Great Ascent*, and other works.

TUNG ORANS, appearing for the first time in these pages, has previously published in *Accent* and *Chelsea Review*.

H. L. GINSBERG, Sabato Morais Professor of Biblical History and Literature at the Jewish Theological Seminary, collaborated with Harry M. Orlinsky and Ephraim A. Speiser on the new translation of the Torah recently published by the Jewish Publication Society and discussed elsewhere in this issue by Theodor H. Gaster.

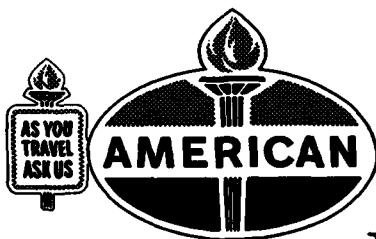


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